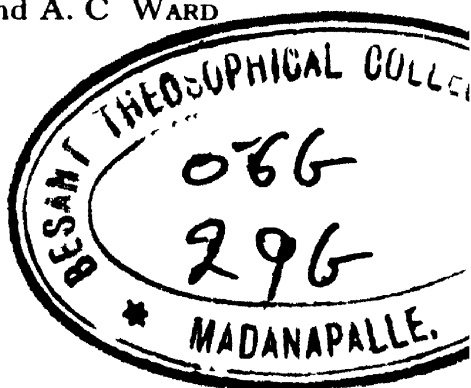


IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

BY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Selected by T EARLE WELBY;
with an Introduction by CHARLES
WILLIAMS; and Notes by F. A
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INTRODUCTION

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR was born in 1775; he died in 1864. He was born, that is, before the Romantic Revival in letters had begun; he died, fourteen years after Wordsworth, long after it had ended. In the year of his birth there appeared Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*; in the following year the first volume of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Round about the date of his death appeared *Romola* (1863), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864), *Enoch Arden* (1864), *Dramatis Personæ* (1864), and *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865). Between those two periods in literature lay all Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Beddoes, Darley, and Hood. With any of them all Landor had as much alliance as with any other — which is to say, very little. There were two writers who, being neither Augustan nor Victorian, remained singularly aloof from the Romantic affairs of their time in letters; one was Landor, and one was Jane Austen.

It is perhaps their only resemblance, except in the sudden flashes of insight of which they were both capable. They could both be tender; they could both be devastating. In general, however, Jane's was the more universal genius. Her style was more subdued and less noticeable, though no less effective; her concern was with men and women in their daily affairs. But Landor in his books made himself a colonnade of marble to walk in, and though he admitted to it all who came, his guests were usually men and women introduced on high affairs of state. He superbly withdrew himself to his art, and his art has ever since remained superbly withdrawn.

It was an age of imagined perfections. Human perfectibility and human freedom were the watchwords of the great political Romanticists. 'Man was born free and is everywhere in chains,' Rousseau had written; and men had believed the great half-truth. Freedom was man's prerogative, and perfection his possibility. He had been robbed of the one and cheated of the other. By whom? By tyrants; more exactly in their dreams (and less accurately in the facts), by kings and priests. Shelley declared it to the world; so did Landor. Kings and priests—and the intelligence of their genius compelled them both to add mobs—were responsible, and must be destroyed or changed. They both attempted, in different ways, to change Oxford as a start, and they both failed. Landor fired a gun at the windows of a man he disliked; Shelley fired an intellectual gun at the windows of the university by publishing a pamphlet on the *Necessity of Atheism* (1811). The authorities refused to allow the necessity of the material or the mental gun, and sent down their owners. With a high sense of an injured heart each young poet went out into the world, and abandoned himself to a life in which, however surely perfection was on his side, he was continually to find a great deal of imperfection around him.

Landor, indeed, spent his life in continual personal quarrels of the most violent kind. He was enraged by his father (while alive), by his neighbours (wherever he was), by his wife (when in 1811 he married), by his comrades on an expedition to fight against Napoleon in Spain (1808), by English, Spaniards, and Italians, by his relations, his friends, and his enemies. During almost the whole of his life he was at war personally and intellectually. And during almost the whole of his life, amidst that tumult of frenzy, he was producing prose and verse of the most stately kind, illuminated sometimes by touches of an almost supernatural delicacy. Yet the two

things were not so greatly opposed as they seem. For his personal behaviour had in general a high dignity; he felt and expressed passion in the loftiest sense of the word, and the power of his imagination which could not keep bitterness and anger out of his life was able in his writings to order and harmonize the lesser passions into his proud style.

That imagination owed something to a personal prejudice. He was of good birth; he knew it, loved it, exaggerated and exalted it. Almost by birth, certainly by belief and by preference, he was among the aristocrats. It was not for him to treat the English language lightly. It was the vehicle of an aristocratic mind, which recognized in it its own verbal aristocracy of long descent and high vocation. He recognized and obeyed its traditions, and he had recognized them early. He had been at first under the influence of the Greek and Latin classics; later he came under the influence of *Paradise Lost*. 'My prejudices,' he wrote, 'in favour of ancient literature began to wear away on *Paradise Lost*; and even the great hexameter sounded to me tinkling when I had recited aloud in my solitary walks on the seashore the haughty appeal of Satan and the deep penitence of Eve.'

No one who has so come under the influence of that sublime verse can ever be the same again, but in Landor it did but encourage him upon his own proper way. He composed *Gebir*, a long poem, which he published in 1798. It opens:

When old Silenus call'd the Satyrs home,
Satyrs then tender-hooft and ruddy-horn'd,
With Bacchus and the Nymphs, he sometimes rose
Amidst the tale or pastoral, and shew'd
The light of purest wisdom; and the God
Scatter'd with wholesome fruit the pleasant plains.

It was in this semi-Miltonic spirit that he separated himself with gladness from the Romantic literature of his day: 'I

claim no place in the world of letters ; I am alone and will be alone as long as I live, and after ;' 'It has been my fortune and felicity, from my earliest days, to have avoided all competition ;' 'I shall dine late, but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select ;' 'He who is within two paces of his ninetyeth year may sit down and make no excuses ; he must be unpopular, he never tried to be much otherwise, he never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering.'

Such notes are not frequent in the critical confessions of English writers ; as a rule from Chaucer to Chesterton they have been content to write and live among their fellows, and only the greatness of genius set even Shakespeare alone. Milton in the seventeenth and Patmore in the nineteenth centuries made comments on their solitude, if not claims to it ; but there was all but a boast in Landor's which was not in theirs. He was well-born, in letters as in life ; in both he seemed to himself of loftier rank than serious truth can allow him.

To say so is to be unfair to Landor, yet it is an unfairness which all but the most fanatical Landorian will excuse. It is not merely by accident or by the dullness of our critical taste that so much of Landor's prose remains unread. The *Imaginary Conversations*, from which the following pieces are taken, began the publication of their five volumes in 1824 and closed them in 1829. For our modern and feebler minds the title is itself misleading. In our contemporary novels we are used to realistic conversation, to slang and hesitation, to dashes and dots, to all the tricks, verbal or typographical, by which the incapacity and folly of our daily speech is made clear. We do not expect the lofty exchanges of conscious art, the arranged modulations of careful thought in careful utterance, stately rhythm and proportionable, if undecorated

diction. And this is what we find in Landor. Nor is it wholly our daily habit of life that has left us unprepared; it is the habit of our literature. From Malory to Fielding, from Smollett to Dickens, from Thackeray to—Galsworthy, let us say, lest we should be invidious, there are few prose writers who imagine conversations so. Milton's archangels, had they ever condescended to prose, might have managed it, but the speech of archangels seems to need the wings of poetry and the humanity of Milton's all but universal mind to carry it. These others are the conversations of great men; we are purified and instructed, we are humbled and dwarfed by them. It is very well to be humbled; it is more tiresome to be dwarfed; and there are pages of Landor where he dwarfs us with his exalted art, without humbling us by his profound and intense passion. We weary of those halls and colonnades of style, of that solemn air of recollection and declamation, and we begin to find Landor dull.

It is folly again, another example of the fatal folly of asking from a writer what he neither will nor can give. One might as well ask for good priests or good kings in Landor as for colloquial phrases. His aristocratic republicanism forbade him to present the one or to use the other. With the dreams of royalty or orthodox religion he had little sympathy, and we miss in him the vivid concerns of a large part of mankind. It was his limitation, and in so much prose that limitation becomes monotonous, if we permit ourselves to be aware of it. But if we confine our attention to the substance contained within that limitation, we shall find ourselves of a different mind. He said of his own style: 'I have resigned and abandoned many things because I unreasonably doubted my legitimate claim to them, and many more because I believed I had enough substance in the house without them.' The substance which he has, and communicates, is the nourishment in every soul of the wise and generous Best, of an

aristocracy of spirit capable of and manifested in a noble heroism. One feels sometimes one needs to be something of a hero to read all Landor. But it is wiser to remark how heroic is his style and how heroic his spirit. The *Conversations* contain many examples of extraordinary crises and of commonplace experiences. They maintain towards them all that magnanimity which Landor, despite all his faults, profoundly believed to be a condition of any tolerable life of the soul. His prose has a ceremony about it but not a profusion. Its disposed order is conscious, but only by conscious effort can a continual level of virtue possibly be obtained. Virtue, magnanimous virtue, is the quality Landor demanded of man; his prose at its greatest communicates sacramentally that nobility and severe beauty of life to its reader. It is shown in *Elizabeth Gaunt* and *Joan of Arc* as it is in *Marcellus* and *Blake*. It is a quality which, for all its severity, has about it a capacity of lovely and swift tenderness, and for all its limitation a universal sense of man and his doom. There are, no doubt, greater writers than Landor, but it is certain that if we underrate his greatness we shall never be able to appreciate theirs. He is, in that sense, a test of our own art, in life as well as in letters, and the extremest experiences of prose and (more usually) of poetry lie on the yonder side of his stately barrier.

He attributes an overheavy part of man's burden to the deliberate machinations of wicked men, mostly tyrants. He was himself (as his first biographer, Forster, remarked) apt where he had power to become tyrannical—with the highest motives. The motives of other tyrants did not seem to him nearly so high. Where he had no power he was apt to become rebellious; and in general the motives of all rebels seemed to him not only high but exalted. But there is a tyranny of Life itself against which rebellion is futile and foolish. Against that tyranny there are but two defences—

heroism and love. Landor knew of them both. He accepted life—at least, in literature—as he accepted literature itself, on the conditions which he understood them separately to impose. He understood Fate, and from the workings of Fate he could extract the last drop of sweetness.

The two dialogues of Aesop and Rhodope contain as exquisite examples of this as any; balanced and restrained as the prose is, there are phrases which contain the passion of abandonment or dereliction. But the fullness of that passion is apt to be felt only by the fullness of adult knowledge; no easy acquaintance with letters will fathom the depth of such a sentence as: ‘There is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated; of which the echo is not faint at last.’

This solemn music of a consciousness of death echoes down his prose and sometimes in unexpected places. To the obsequious Chancellor in *Peter and Alexis* is given one climax; ‘The Hand of death; the name of father;’ to Bossuet, in the not quite worthy presentation of the great bishop during his dialogue with the Duchess de Fontanges. ‘Duchess de Fontanges, think on this! Lady! so live as to think on it undisturbed.’ For Death, to one so full of the gusto of living as Landor, was the only opponent he could not despise. Even magnanimity of spirit could there give no more than cheerful memories and peace at heart.

CHARLES WILLIAMS

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

XERXES AND ARTABANUS

Artabanus. Many nations, O Xerxes, have risen higher in power, but no nation rose ever to the same elevation in glory as the Greek.

Xerxes. For which reason, were there no other, I would destroy it; then all the glory this troublesome people have acquired will fall unto me in addition to my own.

Artabanus. The territory, yes; the glory, no. The solid earth may yield to the mighty: one particle of glory is never to be detached from the acquirer and possessor.

Xerxes. Artabanus! Artabanus! thou speakest more like an Athenian than a Persian. If thou forgettest thy country, remember at least thy race.

Artabanus. I owe duty and obedience to my King; I owe truth both to King and country. Years have brought me experience.

Xerxes. And timidity.

Artabanus. Yes, before God.

Xerxes. And not before the monarch?

Artabanus. My last word said it.

Xerxes. I too am pious; yea, even more devout than thou. Was there ever such a sacrifice as that of the thousand beeves, which on the Mount of Ilion I offered up in supplication to Athenè? I think it impossible the gods of Hellas should refuse me victory over such outcasts and barbarians in return for a thousand head of cattle. Never was above a tenth of the number offered up to them before. Indeed, I doubt whether a tenth of that tenth come not nearer to the amount: for the Greeks are great boasters, and, in their

exceeding cleverness and roguery, would chuckle at cheating the eagerly expectant and closely observant gods. What sayest thou?

Artabanus. About the Greeks I can say nothing to the contrary: but about the gods a question is open. Are they more vigorous, active, and vigilant for the thousand beeves? Certain it is that every Mede and Persian in the army would have improved in condition after feasting on them: as they might all have done for many days.

Xerxes. But their feasting or fasting could have no influence on the gods, who, according to their humour at the hour, might either laugh or scowl at them.

Artabanus. I know not the will of Him above; for there is only one; as our fathers and those before them have taught us. Ignorant Greeks, when they see the chariot of his representative drawn before thee by white horses, call him Zeus.

Xerxes. Mithra, the sun, we venerate.

Artabanus. Mithra we call the object of our worship. One sits above the sun, observes it, watches it, and replenishes it perpetually with his own light to guide the walk of the seasons. He gives the sun its beauty, its strength, its animation.

Xerxes. I worship him devoutly. But if one God can do us good, fifty can do us more, aided by demigods and heroes.

Artabanus. Could fifty lamps in a royal chamber add light to it when open to the meridian?

Xerxes. No doubt they could

Artabanus. Are they wanted?

Xerxes. Perhaps not. They must be, even there, if the sun should go behind a cloud.

Artabanus. God avert the omen!

Xerxes. I have better omens in abundance. I am confident, I am certain of success. The more powerful and the

more noble of the Greeks, the Athenians, Spartans, Thes-salians, are with me, are ready to join me.

Artabanus. How many of them, fugitives from their country, or traitors to it, can be trusted?

Xerxes. The Aleuadae from Larissa, country of Achilles, whose sepulchral mound we visited, offer me their submission and the strongholds on the borders of their territory. The descendants of Pisistratus, with the King of Sparta, are under my protection, and obedient to my will. They who have been stripped of power, lawful or unlawful, are always the most implacable enemies of their country. Whether they return to it by force or by treachery, or by persuasion and the fickleness of the people, they rule with rigour. Ashamed of complicity and cowardice, the rabble, the soldiery, the priests, the nobles, hail them with acclamations, and wait only to raise louder, until his death, natural or violent (but violent and natural are here the same), shall deliver them again from their bondage. Then cometh my hand afresh over the people and draweth it gently back unto me. Resistance is vain. Have I not commanded the refractory and insolent sea to be scourged? and not for disobeying my orders, which it never dared, but in my absence for destroying my bridge. The sentence hath already been carried into execution. Never more in my proximity and to my detriment will it presume to be tumultuous and insurgent.

Artabanus. O King! thy power is awful, is irresistible; but can the waves feel?¹

Xerxes. Mutineers can; and these waves were mutineers. They hiss and roar and foam, and swell and sink down again; and never are quiet. This, O Artabanus, is so like undisciplined men, that it appears to me they also may feel. Whether they do or not, terror is stricken into the hearts of the

¹ Dead men, it is said, have been whipped under the Czar Nicholas; but they were alive and hale when the whipping began.

beholders. No exertion of superior power but works upon the senses of mankind. Men are always the most obedient to, and follow the most vociferously, those who can and who do chastise, whether them or others. A trifle of benefit, bestowed on them afterward, drops like balm into the wound: but balm the most precious and the most sanitary drops insensibly on an unwounded part. Behold! here come into my presence, to be reviewed at my leisure, the silver shields. To what perfect discipline have I brought my army! Its armature is either the admiration or the terror of the universe. What sayest thou?

Artabanus. Certainly our Median and Persian cavalry is excellent. In regard to the armature, which former kings and generals devised, I entreat the liberty to remark, that its brightness and gorgeousness are better adapted to attract the fancies of women and boys, than to strike terror into martial men.

Xerxes. Look thou again, if thine eyes can endure the splendour, look thou again at my bodyguard, and at their silver shields, and at their spears with golden pomegranates at the nearer end.

Artabanus. Permit me to inquire, of what utility are these golden pomegranates? They stick not into the ground, which sometimes is needful; they are injurious to the arm in grasping, more injurious in evolution, and may sometimes be handles for the enemy. Metal breastplates, metal corselets, metal shields, silver or brass, are unwieldly and wearisome, not only by the weight but by the heat, especially at that season of the year when armies are most in activity.

Xerxes. What wouldst thou have? What wouldst thou suggest?

Artabanus. I would have neither horse hair nor plumage, nor other ornament, on the helmet, which are inconvenient to the soldier, but are convenient to the enemy. Helmets, alike

for cavalry and infantry, should in form be conical, or shaped as the keel of a ship. In either case, a stroke of the sword, descending on it would more probably glance off, without inflicting a wound. But I would render them less heavy, and less subject to the influence of heat and cold.

Xerxes. Impossible! How? ~~Q~~

Artabanus. There are materials. Cork, two fingers' breadth in thickness, covered with well-seasoned, strained, and levigated leather, would serve the purpose both for helmet and corselet, and often turn aside, often resist, both sword and spear.

Xerxes. My younger soldiers, especially the officers, would take little pride in such equipment.

Artabanus. The pride of the officer ought to be in the efficiency and comfort of the soldier. Latterly I have been grieved to see vain and idle young persons introduce alterations, which wiser men laugh at, and by which the enemy only, and their tailor, can profit. We should be more efficient if we were less decorative.

Xerxes. Efficient! what can excel us?

Artabanus. Ah, my King! Our ancestors have excelled *their* ancestors in various improvements and inventions: our children may excel *us*. Where is that beyond which there is nothing! Great would be our calamity, for great our disgrace and shame, if barbarians, in any action, however slight and partial, should discomfit the smallest part of our armies. And there are barbarians whose bodies are more active, whose vigilance more incessant, whose abstinence more enduring, and whose armour is less impedimental, than ours. I blush at some of our bravest and best generals giving way so easily to fantastical and inexperienced idlers, who never saw a battle even from a balcony or a tower. Who is he that would not respect and venerate grey hairs? but, seeing such dereliction of dignity, such relaxation of

duty, such unworthy subserviency, who can? Every soldier should be able to swim, and should have every facility for doing it. Corselets of the form I described, would enable whole bodies of troops to cross broad and deep rivers, and would save a great number of pontoons, and their carriages, and their bullocks. No shield would be necessary; so that every soldier, Mede and Persian, would have one hand the more out of two. Let the barbarous nations in our service use only their own weapons; it is inexpedient and dangerous to instruct them in better.

Xerxes. There is somewhat of wisdom, but not much, O Artabanus, in thy suggestions; had there been more, the notions would first have occurred to me. But with the arms which our men already bear we are perfectly a match for the Greeks, who, seeing our numbers, will fly.

Artabanus. Whither? From one enemy to another? Believe me, sir, neither Athenian nor Spartan will ever fly. If he loses this one battle he loses life or freedom; and he knows it.

Xerxes. I would slay only the armed. The women and children I would in part divide among the bravest of my army, and in part I would settle on the barren localities of my dominions, whereof there are many.

Artabanus. Humanely and royally spoken: but did it never once occur to an observer so sagacious, that thousands and tens of thousands, in your innumerable host, would gladly occupy and cultivate those desert places, in which an Athenian would pine away? Immense tracts of your dominions are scantily inhabited. Two million men are taken from agriculture and other works of industry, of whom probably a third would have married, another third would have had children born unto them from the wives they left behind: of these thousands and tens of thousands God only knows how many may return. Not only losses are

certain; but wide fields must lie uncultivated, much cattle be the prey of wild beasts throughout the empire, and more of worse depredators, who never fear the law, but always the battle, and who skulk behind and hide themselves, to fall upon what unprotected property has been left by braver men. Unless our victory and our return be speedy, your providence in collecting stores, during three entire years, will have been vain. Already the greater part (four-fifths at the lowest computation) hath been consumed. Attica and Sparta could not supply a sufficiency for two millions of men additional, and three hundred thousand horses, two months. Provender will soon be wanting for the sustenance of their own few cattle: summer heats have commenced; autumn is distant, and unpromising.

Xerxes. Disaffection! disaffection! Artabanus, beware! I love my father's brother; but not even my father's brother shall breathe despondency or disquietude into my breast. Well do I remember thy counsel against this expedition.

Artabanus. Thou thyself for a while, O King, and before I gave my counsel, didst doubt and hesitate.

Xerxes. The holy Dream enlightened me; and thou also wert forced to acknowledge the visitation of the same. Awful and superhuman was the Apparition. Never had I believed that even a Deity would threaten Xerxes. A second time, when I had begun again to doubt and hesitate, it appeared before me; the same stately figure, the same menacing attitude, nearer and nearer. Thou wilt acknowledge, O Artabanus, that in this guise, or one more terrible, he came likewise unto thee.

Artabanus. Commanded by my King to enter his chamber and to sleep in his bed, I did so. Discourse on the invasion of Greece had animated some at supper, and depressed others. Wine was poured freely into the cups equally of these and of those. Mardonius, educated by the wisest of

the Mages, and beloved by all of them, was long in conference with his old preceptor. Toward the close they were there alone. Wearied, and fearful of offending, I retired, and left them together. The royal bedchamber had many tapers in various parts of it: by degrees they grew more and more dim, breathing forth such odours as royalty alone is privileged to inhale. Slumber came over me; heavy sleep succeeded.

Xerxes. It was thus with me, the first night and the second. Mardonius would never have persuaded me, had dreams and visions been less constant and less urgent. What pious man ought to resist them? Nevertheless, I am still surrounded and trammelled by perplexities.

Artabanus. The powerful, the generous, the confiding, always are; kings especially.

Xerxes. Mardonius, I begin to suspect, is desirous of conquering Greece principally in order to become satrap of that country.

Artabanus. He is young; he may be and ought to be ambitious, but I believe him to be loyal.

Xerxes. Artabanus! thou art the only one about me who never spoke ill, or hinted it, of another.

Artabanus. I have never walked in the path of evil-doers, and know them not.

Xerxes. Fortunate am I that a man so wise and virtuous hath come over to my opinion. The Vision was irresistible.

Artabanus. It confirmed, not indeed my opinion, but the words formerly told me by a Mage now departed.

Xerxes. What words? Did he likewise foresee and foretell my conquest of Hellas?

Artabanus. I know not whether he foresaw it: certainly he never foretold it unto me. But wishing to impress on my tender mind (for I was then about the age of puberty) the power appertaining to the Mages, he declared to me, among other wonders, that the higher of them could induce sleep,

of long continuance and profound, by a movement of the hand; could make the sleeper utter his inmost thoughts; could inspire joy or terror, love or hatred; could bring remote things and remote persons near, even the future, even the dead. Is it impossible that the Dream was one of them?

Xerxes. I am quite lost in the darkness of wonder; for never hast thou been known to utter an untruth, or a truth disparaging to the Mages. Their wisdom is unfathomable; their knowledge is unbounded by the visible world in which we live: their empire is vast even as mine. But take heed; who knows but the gods themselves are creatures of their hands! My hair raises up my diadem at the awful thought.

Artabanus. The just man, O Xerxes, walks humbly in the presence of his God, but walks fearlessly. Deities of many nations are within thy tents; and each of them is thought the most powerful, the only true one, by his worshipper. Some, it is reported, are jealous: if so, the worshipper is, or may be, better than they are. The courts and pavilions of others are represented by their hymners as filled with coals and smoke, and with chariots and instruments of slaughter. These are the Deities of secluded regions and gloomy imaginations. We are now amid a people of more lively and more genial faith.

Xerxes. I think their gods are easy to propitiate, and worth propitiating. The same singer who celebrated the valour of Achilles hath described in another poem the residence of these gods; where they lead quiet lives above the winds and tempests; where frost never binds the pure illimitable expanse; where snow never whirls around; where lightning never quivers; but temperate warmth and clearest light are evermore about them.

Such is the description which the sons of Hipparchus have translated for my amusement from the singer.

Artabanus. Whatever be the quarrels in the various tents,

extending many and many parasangs in every direction, there is no quarrel or disturbance about the objects of veneration. Barbarous are many of the nations under thee, but none so barbarous. There may be such across the Danube and across the Adriatic; old regions of fable; countries where there are Laestrigons and Cyclopes, and men turned into swine; there may be amid the wastes of Scythia, where Gryphons are reported to guard day and night treasures of gold buried deep under the rocks, and to feed insatiably on human blood and marrow; but none, O happy King, within the regions, interminable as they are, under the beneficent sway of thy sceptre.

Xerxes. The huntsman knows how to treat dogs that quarrel in the kennel; moreover he perceives the first symptoms of the rabid, and his arrow is upon the string.

Ancient times and modern have seen annihilated two great armies; the greatest of each: that of Xerxes and that of Napoleon. Xerxes was neither the more ambitious of these invaders nor the more powerful, but greatly the more provident. Three years together he had been storing magazines in readiness for his expedition, and had collected fresh provisions in abundance on his march. Napoleon marched where none had been or could be collected, instead of taking the road by Dantzic, in which fortress were ample stores for his whole army until it should reach Petersburg by the coast. No hostile fleet could intercept such vessels as would convey both grain and munition. The nobility of Moscow would have rejoiced at the destruction of a superseding city, become the seat of empire. Whether winter came on ten days earlier or later, snow was sure to blockade and famish the army in Moscow; the importation of provisions (had sufficiency existed within reach) and the march northward were equally impracticable. Napoleon left behind him a signal example that strategy is only a constituent part of a commander. In his Russian campaign even this was wanting. Xerxes lost his army not so totally as Napoleon lost his: Xerxes in great measure by the valour and skill of his enemy, Napoleon by his own imprudence. The faith of Xerxes was in his Dream, Napoleon's in his Star: the Dream was illusory, the Star a falling one.

AESOP AND RHODOPE

First Conversation

Aesop. Albeit thou approachest me without any sign of derision, let me tell thee before thou advancest a step nearer, that I deem thee more hard-hearted than the most petulant of those other young persons, who are pointing and sneering from the doorway.

Rhodope. Let them continue to point and sneer at me: they are happy; so am I; but are you? Think me hard-hearted, O good Phrygian! but graciously give me the reason for thinking it; otherwise I may be unable to correct a fault too long overlooked by me, or to deprecate a grave infliction of the gods.

Aesop. I thought thee so, my little maiden, because thou camest toward me without the least manifestation of curiosity.

Rhodope. Is the absence of curiosity a defect?

Aesop. None whatever.

Rhodope. Are we blamable in concealing it if we have it?

Aesop. Surely not. But it is feminine; and where none of it comes forward, we may suspect that other feminine appurtenances, such as sympathy for example, are deficient. Curiosity slips in among you before the passions are awake; curiosity comforts your earliest cries; curiosity intercepts your latest. For which reason Daedalus, who not only sculptured but painted admirably, represents her in the vestibule of the Cretan labyrinth as a goddess.

Rhodope. What was she like?

Aesop. There now? Like? Why, like Rhodope.

Rhodope. You said I have nothing of the kind.

Aesop. I soon discovered my mistake in this, and more than this, and not altogether to thy disadvantage.

Rhodope. I am glad to hear it.

Aesop. Art thou? I will tell thee then how she was depicted: for I remember no author who has related it. Her lips were half-open; her hair flew loosely behind her, designating that she was in haste; it was more disordered, and it was darker, than the hair of Hope is represented, and somewhat less glossy. Her cheeks had a very fresh colour, and her eyes looked into every eye that fell upon them; by her motion she seemed to be on her way into the labyrinth.

Rhodope. Oh, how I wish I could see such a picture!

Aesop. I do now.

Rhodope. Where? where? Troublesome man! Are you always so mischievous? but your smile is not ill-natured. I cannot help thinking that the smiles of men are pleasanter and sweeter than of women; unless of the women who are rather old and decrepit who seem to want help, and who perhaps are thinking that we girls are now the very images of what *they* were formerly. But girls never look at me so charmingly as you do, nor smile with such benignity; and yet, O Phrygian! there are several of them who really are much handsomer.

Aesop. Indeed? Is that so clear?

Rhodope. Perhaps in the sight of the gods they may not be, who see all things as they are. But some of them appear to me to be very beautiful.

Aesop. Which are those?

Rhodope. The very girls who think me the ugliest of them all. How strange!

Aesop. That they should think thee so?

Rhodope. No, no; but that nearly all the most beautiful should be of this opinion; and the others should often come to look at me, apparently with delight, over each other's

shoulder or under each other's arm, clinging to their girdle or holding by their sleeve, and hanging a little back, as if there were something about me unsafe. They seem fearful regarding me; for here are many venomous things in this country, of which we have none at home.

Aesop. And some which we find all over the world. But thou art too talkative.

Rhodope. Now indeed you correct me with great justice, and with great gentleness. I know not why I am so pleased to talk with you. But what you say to me is different from what others say: the thoughts, the words, the voice, the look, all different. And yet reproof is but little pleasant, especially to those who are unused to it.

Aesop. Why didst thou not spring forward and stare at me, having heard as the rest had done, that I am unwillingly a slave, and indeed not over-willingly a deformed one?

Rhodope. I would rather that neither of these misfortunes had befallen you.

Aesop. And yet within the year thou wilt rejoice that they have.

Rhodope. If you truly thought so, you would not continue to look at me with such serenity. Tell me why you say it.

Aesop. Because by that time thou wilt prefer me to the handsomest slave about the house!

Rhodope. For shame! vain creature!

Aesop. By the provision of the gods, the undersized and distorted are usually so. The cork of vanity buoys up their chins above all swimmers on the tide of life. But, Rhodope, my vanity has not yet begun.

Rhodope. How do you know that my name is Rhodope?

Aesop. Were I malicious I would inform thee, and turn against thee the tables on the score of vanity.

Rhodope. What can you mean?

Aesop. I mean to render thee happy in life, and glorious

long after. Thou shalt be sought by the powerful, thou shalt be celebrated by the witty, and thou shalt be beloved by the generous and the wise. Xanthus may adorn the sacrifice, but the Immortal shall receive it from the altar.

Rhodope. I am but fourteen years old, and Xanthus is married. Surely he would not rather love me than one to whose habits and endearments he has been accustomed for twenty years.

Aesop. It seems wonderful: but such things do happen.

Rhodope. Not among us Thracians. I have seen in my childhood men older than Xanthus, who, against all remonstrances and many struggles, have fondled and kissed, before near relatives, wives of the same age, proud of exhibiting the honourable love they bore toward them: yet, in the very next room, the very same day, scarcely would they press to their bosoms while you could (rather slowly) count twenty, nor kiss for half the time, beautiful young maidens, who, casting down their eyes, never stirred, and only said, '*Don't! Don't!*'

Aesop. What a rigid morality is the Thracian! How courageous the elderly! and how enduring the youthful!

Rhodope. Here in Egypt we are nearer to strange creatures! to men without heads, to others who ride on dragons.

Aesop. Stop there, little Rhodope! In all countries we live among strange creatures. However, there are none such in the world as thou hast been told of since thou camest hither.

Rhodope. Oh yes there are. You must not begin by shaking my belief, and by making me know less than others of my age. They all talk of them: nay, some creatures not by any means prettier, are worshipped here as deities: I have seen them with my own eyes. I wonder that you above all others should deny the existence of prodigies.

Aesop. Why dost thou wonder at it particularly in me?

Rhodope. Because when you were brought hither yesterday, and when several of my fellow-maidens came around you, questioning you about the manners and customs of your country, you began to tell them stories of beasts who spoke, and spoke reasonably.

Aesop. They are almost the only people of my acquaintance who do.

Rhodope. And you call them by the name of *people*?

Aesop. For want of a nobler and a better. Didst thou hear related what I had been saying?

Rhodope. Yes, every word, and perhaps more.

Aesop. Certainly more; for my audience was of females. But canst thou repeat any portion of the narrative?

Rhodope. They began by asking you whether all the men in Phrygia were like yourself.

Aesop. Art thou quite certain that this was the real expression they used? Come: no blushes. Do not turn round.

Rhodope. It had entirely that meaning.

Aesop. Did they not inquire if all Phrygians were such horrible monsters as the one before them?

Rhodope. Oh heaven and earth! this man is surely omniscient. Kind guest! do not hurt them for it. Deign to repeat to me, if it is not too troublesome, what you said about the talking beasts.

Aesop. The innocent girls asked me many questions, or rather half-questions; for never was one finished before another from the same or from a different quarter was begun.

Rhodope. This is uncivil: I would never have interrupted you.

Aesop. Pray tell me why all that courtesy.

Rhodope. For fear of losing a little of what you were about to say, or of receiving it somewhat changed. We never say the same thing in the same manner when we have been

interrupted. Beside, there are many who are displeased at it; and if you had been, it would have shamed and vexed me.

Aesop. Art thou vexed so easily?

Rhodope. When I am ashamed I am. I shall be jealous if you are kinder to the others than to me, and if you refuse to tell me the story you told them yesterday.

Aesop. I have never yet made any one jealous; and I will not begin to try my talent on little Rhodope.

They asked me who governs Phrygia at present. I replied that the Phrygians had just placed themselves under the dominion of a sleek and quiet animal, half-fox, half-ass, named Alopiconos. At one time he seems fox almost entirely; at another, almost entirely ass.

Rhodope. And can he speak?

Aesop. Few better.

Rhodope. Are the Phrygians contented with him?

Aesop. They who raised him to power and authority rub their hands rapturously: nevertheless, I have heard several of the principal ones, in the very act of doing it, breathe out from closed teeth, '*The cursed fox!*' and others, '*The cursed ass!*'

Rhodope. What has he done?

Aesop. He has made the nation the happiest in the world, they tell us.

Rhodope. How?

Aesop. By imposing a heavy tax on the necessities of life, and making it quite independent.

Rhodope. Oh Aesop! I am ignorant of politics, as of everything else. We Thracians are near Phrygia: our kings, I believe, have not conquered it: what others have?

Aesop. None: but the independence which Alopiconos has conferred upon it, is conferred by hindering the corn of other lands, more fertile and less populous, from entering it, until so many of the inhabitants have died of famine and

disease, that there will be imported just enough for the remainder.

Rhodope. Holy Jupiter! protect my country! and keep for ever its asses and its foxes wider apart!

Tell me more. You know many things that have happened in the world. Beside the strange choice you just related, what is the most memorable thing that has occurred in Phrygia since the Trojan war?

Aesop. An event more memorable preceded it: but nothing since will appear to thee so extraordinary.

Rhodope. Then tell me only that.

Aesop. It will interest thee less, but the effect is more durable than of the other. Soon after the dethronement of Saturn, with certain preliminary ceremonies, by his eldest son Jupiter, who thus became the legitimate king of gods and men, the lower parts of nature on our earth were also much affected. At this season the water in all the rivers of Phrygia was running low, but quietly, so that the bottom was visible in many places, and grew tepid and warm and even hot in some. At last it became agitated and excited: and loud bubbles rose up from it, audible to the ears of Jupiter, declaring that it had an indefeasible right to exercise its voice on all occasions, and of rising to the surface at all seasons. Jupiter, who was ever much given to hilarity, laughed at this: but the louder he laughed, the louder bubbled the mud, beseeching him to thunder and lighten and rain in torrents, and to sweep away dams and dykes and mills and bridges and roads, and moreover all houses in all parts of the country that were not built of mud. Thunder rolled in every quarter of the heavens: the lions and panthers were frightened, and growled horribly: the foxes, who are seldom at fault, began to fear for the farm-yards: and were seen with vertical tails, three of which, if put together, would be little stouter than a child's whip for whipping-tops, so

thoroughly soaked were they and dragged in the mire: not an animal in the forest could lick itself dry: their tongues ached with attempting it. But the mud gained its cause, and rose above the river-sides. At first it was elated by success; but it had floated in its extravagance no long time before a panic seized it, at hearing out of the clouds the fatal word *teleutaion*, which signifies *final*. It panted and breathed hard; and, at the moment of exhausting the last remnant of its strength, again it prayed to Jupiter, in a formulary of words which certain borderers of the principal stream suggested, imploring him that it might stop and subside. It did so. The borderers enriched their fields with it, carting it off, tossing it about, and breaking it into powder. But the streams were too dirty for decent men to bathe in them. and scarcely a fountain in all Phrygia had as much pure water, at its very source, as thou couldst carry on thy head in an earthen jar. For several years afterwards there were pestilential exhalations, and drought and scarcity, throughout the country.

Rhodope. This is indeed a memorable event; and yet I never heard of it before.

Aesop. Dost thou like my histories?

Rhodope. Very much indeed

Aesop. Both of them?

Rhodope. Equally.

Aesop. Then, Rhodope, thou art worthier of instruction than any one I know. I never found an auditor, until the present, who approved of each; one or other of the two was sure to be defective in style or ingenuity: it showed an ignorance of the times or of mankind: it proved only that the narrator was a person of contracted views, and that nothing pleased him.

Rhodope. How could you have hindered, with as many hands as Gyas, and twenty thongs in each, the fox and ass

from uniting? or how could you prevail on Jupiter to keep the mud from bubbling? I have prayed to him for many things more reasonable, and he has never done a single one of them; except the last perhaps.

Aesop. What was it?

Rhodope. That he would bestow on me power and understanding to comfort the poor slave from Phrygia.

Aesop. On what art thou reflecting?

Rhodope. I do not know. Is reflection that which will not lie quiet on the mind, and which makes us ask ourselves questions we cannot answer?

Aesop. Wisdom is but that shadow which we call reflection; dark always, more or less, but usually the most so where there is the most light around it.

Rhodope. I think I begin to comprehend you; but beware lest any one else should. Men will hate you for it, and may hurt you; for they will never bear the wax to be melted in the ear, as your words possess the faculty of doing.

Aesop. They may hurt me, but I shall have rendered them a service first.

Rhodope. Oh Aesop! if you think so, you must soon begin to instruct me how I may assist you, first in performing the service, and then in averting the danger: for I think you will be less liable to harm if I am with you.

Aesop. Proud child!

Rhodope. Not yet; I may be then.

Aesop. We must converse about other subjects.

Rhodope. On what rather?

Aesop. I was accused by thee of attempting to unsettle thy belief in prodigies and portents.

Rhodope. Teach me what is right and proper in regard to them, and in regard to the gods of this country who send them.

Aesop. We will either let them alone, or worship them as our masters do. But thou mayest be quite sure, O Rhodope!

that if there were any men without heads, or any who ride upon dragons, they also would have been worshipped as deities long ago.

Rhodope. Ay; now you talk reasonably: so they would: at least I think so: I mean only in this country. In Thrace we do not think so unworthily of the gods: we are too afraid of Cerberus for that.

Aesop. Speak lower; or thou wilt raise ill blood between him and Anubis. His three heads could hardly lap milk when Anubis with only one could crack the thickest bone.

Rhodope. Indeed! how proud you must be to have acquired such knowledge.

Aesop. It is the knowledge which men most value, as being the most profitable to them; but I possess little of it.

Rhodope. What then will you teach me?

Aesop. I will teach thee, O Rhodope, how to hold Love by both wings, and how to make a constant companion of an ungrateful guest.

Rhodope. I think I am already able to manage so little a creature.

Aesop. He hath managed greater creatures than Rhodope.

Rhodope. They had no scissors to clip his pinions, and they did not slap him soon enough on the back of the hand. I have often wished to see him; but I never have seen him yet.

Aesop. Nor anything like?

Rhodope. I have touched his statue; and once I stroked it down, all over; very nearly. He seemed to smile at me the more for it, until I was ashamed. I was then a little girl: it was long ago: a year at least.

Aesop. Art thou sure it was such a long while since?

Rhodope. How troublesome! Yes! I never told anybody but you: and I never would have told you, unless I had been certain that you would find it out by yourself, as you did

what those false foolish girls said concerning you. I am sorry to call them by such names, for I am confident that on other things and persons they never speak maliciously or untruly.

Aesop. Not about thee?

Rhodope. They think me ugly and conceited, because they do not look at me long enough to find out their mistake. I know I am not ugly, and I believe I am not conceited; so I should be silly if I were offended, or thought ill of them in return. But do you yourself always speak the truth, even when you know it? The story of the mud, I plainly see, is a mythos. Yet, after all, it is difficult to believe; and you have scarcely been able to persuade me, that the beasts in any country talk and reason, or ever did.

Aesop. Wherever they do, they do one thing more than men do.

Rhodope. You perplex me exceedingly: but I would not disquiet you at present with more questions. Let me pause and consider a little, if you please. I begin to suspect that, as gods formerly did, you have been turning men into beasts, and beasts into men. But, Aesop, you should never say the thing that is untrue.

Aesop. We say and do and look no other all our lives.

Rhodope. Do we never know better?

Aesop. Yes; when we cease to please, and to wish it; when death is settling the features, and the cerements are ready to render them unchangeable.

Rhodope. Alas! alas!

Aesop. Breathe, Rhodope, breathe again those painless sighs: they belong to thy vernal season. May thy summer of life be calm, thy autumn calmer, and thy winter never come.

Rhodope. I must die then earlier.

Aesop. Laodameia died; Helen died; Leda, the beloved of Jupiter, went before. It is better to repose in the earth

betimes than to sit up late; better than to cling pertinaciously to what we feel crumbling under us, and to protract an inevitable fall. We may enjoy the present while we are insensible of infirmity and decay: but the present, like a note in music, is nothing but as it appertains to what is past and what is to come. There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodope! that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

Rhodope. Oh Aesop! let me rest my head on yours; it throbs and pains me.

Aesop. What are these ideas to thee?

Rhodope. Sad, sorrowful.

Aesop. Harrows that break the soil, preparing it for wisdom. Many flowers must perish ere a grain of corn be ripened.

And now remove thy head: the cheek is cool enough after its little shower of tears.

Rhodope. How impatient you are of the least pressure!

Aesop. There is nothing so difficult to support imperturbably as the head of a lovely girl, except her grief. Again upon mine! forgetful one! Raise it, remove it, I say. Why wert thou reluctant? why wert thou disobedient? Nay, look not so. It is I (and thou shalt know it) who should look reproachfully.

Rhodope. Reproachfully? did I? I was only wishing you would love me better, that I might come and see you often.

Aesop. Come often and see me, if thou wilt; but expect no love from me.

Rhodope. Yet how gently and gracefully you have spoken and acted, all the time we have been together. You have rendered the most abstruse things intelligible, without once grasping my hand, or putting your fingers among my curls.

Aesop. I should have feared to encounter the displeasure of two persons, if I had.

Rhodope. And well you might. They would scourge you, and scold me.

Aesop. That is not the worst.

Rhodope. The stocks too, perhaps.

Aesop. All these are small matters to the slave.

Rhodope. If they befell you, I would tear my hair and my cheeks, and put my knees under your ankles. Of whom should you have been afraid?

Aesop. Of Rhodope and of Aesop. Modesty in man, O Rhodope! is perhaps the rarest and most difficult of virtues: but intolerable pain is the pursuer of its infringement. Then follow days without content, nights without sleep, throughout a stormy season, a season of impetuous deluge which no fertility succeeds.

Rhodope. My mother often told me to learn modesty, when I was at play among the boys.

Aesop. Modesty in girls is not an acquirement, but a gift of nature: and it costs as much trouble and pain in the possessor to eradicate, as the fullest and firmest lock of hair would do.

Rhodope. Never shall I be induced to believe that men at all value it in themselves, or much in us, although from idleness or from rancour they would take it away from us whenever they can.

Aesop. And very few of you are pertinacious: if you run after them, as you often do, it is not to get it back.

Rhodope. I would never run after any one, not even you: I would only ask you, again and again, to love me.

Aesop. Expect no love from me. I will impart to thee all my wisdom, such as it is; but girls like our folly best. Thou shalt never get a particle of mine from me.

Rhodope. Is love foolish?

Aesop. At thy age and at mine. I do not love thee: if I did, I would the more forbid thee ever to love me.

Rhodope. Strange man!

Aesop. Strange indeed. When a traveller is about to wander on a desert, it is strange to lead him away from it; strange to point out to him the verdant path he should pursue, where the tamarisk and lentisk and acacia wave overhead, where the reseda is cool and tender to the foot that presses it, and where a thousand colours sparkle in the sunshine, on fountains incessantly gushing forth.

Rhodope. Xanthus has all these; and I could be amid them in a moment.

Aesop. Why art not thou?

Rhodope. I know not exactly. Another day perhaps. I am afraid of snakes this morning. Beside, I think it may be sultry out of doors. Does not the wind blow from Libya?

Aesop. It blows as it did yesterday when I came over, fresh across the Aegean, and from Thrace. Thou mayest venture into the morning air.

Rhodope. No hours are so adapted to study as those of the morning. But will you teach me? I shall so love you if you will.

Aesop. If thou wilt *not* love me, I will teach thee.

Rhodope. Unreasonable man!

Aesop. Art thou aware what those mischievous little hands are doing?

Rhodope. They are tearing off the golden hem from the bottom of my robe; but it is stiff and difficult to detach.

Aesop. Why tear it off?

Rhodope. To buy your freedom. Do you spring up, and turn away, and cover your face from me?

Aesop. My freedom? Go, Rhodope! Rhodope! This, of all things, I shall never owe to thee.

Rhodope. Proud man! and you tell me to go! do you? do you? Answer me at least. Must I? and so soon?

Aesop. Child! begone!

AESOP AND RHODOPE

Rhodope. Oh Aesop! you are already more my master than Xanthus is. I will run and tell him so: and I will implore of him, upon my knees, never to impose on *you* a command so hard to obey.

AESOP AND RHODOPE

Second Conversation

Aesop. And so, our fellow slaves are given to contention on the score of dignity?

Rhodope. I do not believe they are much addicted to contention: for, whenever the good Xanthus hears a signal of such misbehaviour, he either brings a scourge into the midst of them, or sends our lady to scold them smartly for it.

Aesop. Admirable evidence against their propensity!

Rhodope. I will not have you find them out so, nor laugh at them.

Aesop. Seeing that the good Xanthus and our lady are equally fond of thee, and always visit thee both together, the girls, however envious, cannot well or safely be arrogant, but must of necessity yield the first place to thee.

Rhodope. They indeed are observant of the kindness thus bestowed upon me: yet they afflict me by taunting me continually with what I am unable to deny.

Aesop. If it is true, it ought little to trouble thee; if untrue, less. I know, for I have looked into nothing else of late, no evil can thy heart have admitted: a sigh of thine before the gods would remove the heaviest that could fall on it. Pray tell me what it may be. Come, be courageous; be cheerful. I can easily pardon a smile if thou empleadest me of curiosity.

Rhodope. They remark to me that enemies or robbers took them forcibly from their parents . . . and that . . . and that . . .

Aesop. Likely enough: what then? Why desist from

speaking? why cover thy face with thy hair and hands? Rhodope! Rhodope! dost thou weep moreover?

Rhodope. It is so sure!

Aesop. Was the fault thine?

Rhodope. O that it were . . . if there was any.

Aesop. While it pains thee to tell it, keep thy silence: but when utterance is a solace, then impart it.

Rhodope. They remind me (oh! who could have had the cruelty to relate it?) that my father, my own dear father. . .

Aesop. Say not the rest: I know it; his day was come.

Rhodope. Sold me, sold me. You start: you did not at the lightning, last night, nor at the rolling sounds above. And do you, generous Aesop! do you also call a misfortune a disgrace?

Aesop. If it is, I am among the most disgraceful of men. Didst thou dearly love thy father?

Rhodope. All loved him. He was very fond of me.

Aesop. And yet sold thee! sold thee to a stranger!

Rhodope. He was the kindest of all kind fathers, nevertheless. Nine summers ago, you may have heard perhaps, there was a grievous famine in our land of Thrace.

Aesop. I remember it perfectly.

Rhodope. O poor Aesop! and were you too famishing in your native Phrygia?

Aesop. The calamity extended beyond the narrow sea that separates our countries. My appetite was sharpened: but the appetite and the wits are equally set on the same grindstone.

Rhodope. I was then scarcely five years old: my mother died the year before: my father sighed at every funeral, but he sighed more deeply at every bridal, song. He loved me because he loved her who bore me: and yet I made him sorrowful whether I cried or smiled. If ever I vexed him, it was because I would not play when he told me, but made him, by my weeping, weep again.

Aesop. And yet he could endure to lose thee! he, thy father! Could any other? could any who lives on the fruits of the earth, endure it? O age, that art incumbent over me! blessed be thou; thrice blessed! Not that thou stillest the tumults of the heart, and promisest eternal calm, but that, prevented by thy beneficence, I never shall experience this only intolerable wretchedness.

Rhodope. Alas! alas!

Aesop. Thou art now happy, and shouldest not utter that useless exclamation.

Rhodope. You said something angrily and vehemently when you stepped aside. Is it not enough that the hand-maidens doubt the kindness of my father? Must so virtuous and so wise a man as Aesop blame him also?

Aesop. Perhaps he is little to be blamed: certainly he is much to be pitied.

Rhodope. Kind heart! on which mine must never rest.

Aesop. Rest on it for comfort and for counsel when they fail thee: rest on it, as the Deities on the breast of mortals, to console and purify it.

Rhodope. Could I remove any sorrow from it, I should be contented.

Aesop. Then be so; and proceed in thy narrative.

Rhodope. Bear with me a little yet. My thoughts have overpowered my words, and now themselves are overpowered and scattered.

Forty-seven days ago (this is only the forty-eighth since I beheld you first) I was a child: I was ignorant, I was careless.

Aesop. If these qualities are signs of childhood, the universe is a nursery.

Rhodope. Affliction, which makes many wiser, had no such effect on me. But reverence and love (why should I hesitate at the one avowal more than at the other?) came over me, to ripen my understanding.

Aesop. O Rhodope! we must loiter no longer upon this discourse.

Rhodope. Why not?

Aesop. Pleasant is yonder beanfield, seen over the high papyrus when it waves and bends: deep-laden with the sweet heaviness of its odour is the listless air that palpitates dizzily above it: but Death is lurking for the slumberer beneath its blossoms.

Rhodope. You must not love then! . . but may not I?

Aesop. We will . . but . . .

Rhodope. We! O sound that is to vibrate on my breast for ever! O hour! happier than all other hours since time began! O gracious gods! who brought me into bondage!

Aesop. Be calm, be composed, be circumspect. We must hide our treasure that we may not lose it.

Rhodope. I do not think that you can love me; and I fear and tremble to hope so. Ah, yes; you have said you did. But again you only look at me, and sigh as if you repented.

Aesop. Unworthy as I may be of thy fond regard, I am not unworthy of thy fullest confidence: why distrust me?

Rhodope. Never will I . . never, never. To know that I possess your love, surpasses all other knowledge, dear as is all that I receive from you. I should be tired of my own voice if I heard it on aught beside: and even yours is less melodious in any other sound than *Rhodope*.

Aesop. Do such little girls learn to flatter?

Rhodope. Teach me how to speak, since you could not teach me how to be silent.

Aesop. Speak no longer of me, but of thyself; and only of things that never pain thee.

Rhodope. Nothing can pain me now.

Aesop. Relate thy story then, from infancy.

Rhodope. I must hold your hand: I am afraid of losing you again.

Aesop. Now begin. Why silent so long?

Rhodope. I have dropped all memory of what is told by me and what is untold.

Aesop. Recollect a little. I can be patient with this hand in mine.

Rhodope. I am not certain that yours is any help to recollection.

Aesop. Shall I remove it?

Rhodope. O! now I think I can recall the whole story. What did you say? did you ask any question?

Aesop. None, excepting what thou hast answered.

Rhodope. Never shall I forget the morning when my father, sitting in the coolest part of the house, exchanged his last measure of grain for a chlamys of scarlet cloth fringed with silver. He watched the merchant out of the door, and then looked wistfully into the corn-chest. I, who thought there was something worth seeing, looked in also, and, finding it empty, expressed my disappointment, not thinking however about the corn. A faint and transient smile came over his countenance at the sight of mine. He unfolded the chlamys, stretched it out with both hands before me, and then cast it over my shoulders. I looked down on the glittering fringe and screamed with joy. He then went out; and I know not what flowers he gathered, but he gathered many; and some he placed in my bosom, and some in my hair. But I told him with captious pride, first that I could arrange them better, and again that I would have only the white. However, when he had selected all the white, and I had placed a few of them according to my fancy, I told him (rising in my slipper) he might crown me with the remainder. The splendour of my apparel gave me a sensation of authority. Soon as the flowers had taken their station on my head, I expressed a dignified satisfaction at the taste displayed by my father, just as if I could have seen how they appeared! But he knew that

there was at least as much pleasure as pride in it, and perhaps we divided the latter (alas! not both) pretty equally. He now took me into the market-place, where a concourse of people was waiting for the purchase of slaves. Merchants came and looked at me; some commending, others disparaging; but all agreeing that I was slender and delicate, that I could not live long, and that I should give much trouble. Many would have bought the chlamys, but there was something less saleable in the child and flowers.

Aesop. Had thy features been coarse and thy voice rustic, they would all have patted thy cheeks and found no fault in thee.

Rhodope. As it was, every one had bought exactly such another in time past, and been a loser by it. At these speeches I perceived the flowers tremble slightly on my bosom, from my father's agitation. Although he scoffed at them, knowing my healthiness, he was troubled internally, and said many short prayers, not very unlike imprecations, turning his head aside. Proud was I, prouder than ever, when at last several talents were offered for me, and by the very man who in the beginning had undervalued me the most, and prophesied the worst of me. My father scowled at him, and refused the money. I thought he was playing a game, and began to wonder what it could be, since I never had seen it played before. Then I fancied it might be some celebration because plenty had returned to the city, insomuch that my father had bartered the last of the corn he hoarded. I grew more and more delighted at the sport. But soon there advanced an elderly man, who said gravely, 'Thou hast stolen this child: her vesture alone is worth above a hundred drachmas. Carry her home again to her parents, and do it directly, or Nemesis and the Eumenides will overtake thee.' Knowing the estimation in which my father had always been holden by his fellow citizens, I laughed again, and pinched his ear. He,

although naturally choleric, burst forth into no resentment at these reproaches, but said calmly, 'I think I know thee by name, O guest! Surely thou art Xanthus the Samian. Deliver this child from famine.'

Again I laughed aloud and heartily; and, thinking it was now my part of the game, I held out both my arms and protruded my whole body toward the stranger. He would not receive me from my father's neck, but he asked me with benignity and solicitude if I was hungry: at which I laughed again, and more than ever: for it was early in the morning, soon after the first meal, and my father had nourished me most carefully and plentifully in all the days of the famine. But Xanthus, waiting for no answer, took out of a sack, which one of his slaves carried at his side, a cake of wheaten bread and a piece of honey-comb and gave them to me. I held the honey-comb to my father's mouth, thinking it the most of a dainty. He dashed it to the ground; but, seizing the bread, he began to devour it ferociously. This also I thought was in play; and I clapped my hands at his distortions. But Xanthus looked on him like one afraid, and smote the cake from him, crying aloud, 'Name the price.' My father now placed me in his arms, naming a price much below what the other had offered, saying, 'The gods are ever with thee, O Xanthus! therefore to thee do I consign my child.' But while Xanthus was counting out the silver, my father seized the cake again, which the slave had taken up and was about to replace in the wallet. His hunger was exasperated by the taste and the delay. Suddenly there arose much tumult. Turning round in the old woman's bosom who had received me from Xanthus, I saw my beloved father struggling on the ground, livid and speechless. The more violent my cries, the more rapidly they hurried me away; and many were soon between us. Little was I suspicious that he had suffered the pangs of famine long before: alas! and he had

suffered them for me. Do I weep while I am telling you they ended? I could not have closed his eyes; I was too young; but I might have received his last breath; the only comfort of an orphan's bosom. Do you now think him blameable, O Aesop?

Aesop. It was sublime humanity: It was forbearance and self-denial which even the immortal gods have never shown us. He could endure to perish by those torments which alone are both acute and slow: he could number the steps of death and miss not one: but he could never see thy tears, nor let thee see his. O weakness above all fortitude! Glory to the man who rather bears a grief corroding his breast, than permits it to prowl beyond, and to prey on the tender and compassionate. Women commiserate the brave, and men the beautiful. The dominion of Pity has usually this extent, no wider. Thy father was exposed to the obloquy not only of the malicious, but also of the ignorant and thoughtless, who condemn in the unfortunate what they applaud in the prosperous. There is no shame in poverty or in slavery, if we neither make ourselves poor by our improvidence nor slaves by our venality. The lowest and highest of the human race are sold: most of the intermediate are also slaves, but slaves who bring no money in the market.

Rhodope. Surely the great and powerful are never to be purchased: are they?

Aesop. It may be a defect in my vision, but I cannot see greatness on the earth. What they tell me is great and aspiring, to me seems little and crawling. Let me meet thy question with another. What monarch gives his daughter for nothing? Either he receives stone walls and unwilling cities in return, or he barter her for a parcel of spears and horses and horsemen, waving away from his declining and helpless age young joyous life, and trampling down the freshest and the sweetest memories. Midas in the height of

[prosperity would have given his daughter to Lycaon, rather than to the gentlest, the most virtuous, the most intelligent of his subjects] Thy father threw wealth aside, and, placing thee under the protection of Virtue, rose up from the house of Famine to partake in the festivals of the gods.

Release my neck, O Rhodope! for I have other questions to ask of thee about him.

Rhodope. To hear thee converse on him in such a manner, I can do even that.

Aesop. Before the day of separation was he never sorrowful? did he never by tears or silence reveal the secret of his soul?

Rhodope. I was too infantine to perceive or imagine his intention. The night before I became the slave of Xanthus, he sat on the edge of my bed. I pretended to be asleep: he moved away silently and softly. I saw him collect in the hollow of his hand the crumbs I had wasted on the floor, and then eat them, and then look if any were remaining. I thought he did so out of fondness for me, remembering that, even before the famine, he had often swept up off the table the bread I had broken, and had made me put it between his lips. I would not dissemble very long, but said:

‘Come, now you have wakened me, you must sing me asleep again, as you did when I was little.’

He smiled faintly at this, and, after some delay, when he had walked up and down the chamber, thus began:

‘I will sing to thee one song more, my wakeful Rhodope! my chirping bird! over whom is no mother’s wing! That it may lull thee asleep, I will celebrate no longer, as in the days of wine and plenteousness, the glory of Mars, guiding in their invisibly rapid onset the dappled steeds of *Rhaesus*. What hast thou to do, my little one, with arrows tired of clustering in the quiver? How much quieter is thy pallet than the tents which whitened the plain of Simöis! What

knowest thou about the river Eurotas? What knowest thou about its ancient palace, once trodden by assembled Gods, and then polluted by the Phrygian? What knowest thou of perfidious men or of sanguinary deeds?

‘Pardon me, O goddess ^{Vanv.} who presidest in Cythera! ^{Canthar. m. 1} I am not irreverent to thee, but ever grateful. May she upon whose brow I lay my hand, praise and bless thee for evermore!

‘Ah yes! continue to hold up above the coverlet those fresh and rosy palms claspt together: her benefits have descended on thy beauteous head, my child! The Fates also have sung, beyond thy hearing, of pleasanter scenes, than snow-fed Hebrus; of more than dim grottos and skybright waters. Even now a low murmur swells upward to my ear: and not from the spindle comes the sound, but from those who sing slowly over it, bending all three their tremulous heads together. I wish thou couldst hear it; for seldom are their voices so sweet. Thy pillow intercepts the song perhaps: lie down again, lie down, my Rhodope! I will repeat what they are saying: +

“‘Happier shalt thou be, nor less glorious, than even she, the truly beloved, for whose return to the distaff and the lyre the portals of Taenarus flew open. In the woody dells of Ismarus, and when she bathed among the swans of Strymon, the Nymphs called her Eurydice. Thou shalt behold that fairest and that fondest one hereafter. But first thou must go unto the land of the lotos, where famine never cometh, and where alone the works of man are immortal.”

‘O my child! the undeceiving Fates have uttered this. Other Powers have visited me, and have strengthened my heart with dreams and visions. We shall meet again, my Rhodope! in shady groves and verdant meadows, and we shall sit by the side of those who loved us.’

He was rising: I threw my arms about his neck, and, before I would let him go, I made him promise to place me,

not by the side, but between them: for I thought of her who had left us. At that time there were but two, O Aesop.

You ponder: you are about to reprove my assurance in having thus repeated my own praises. I would have omitted some of the words, only that it might have disturbed the measure and cadences, and have put me out. They are the very words my dearest father sang; and they are the last: yet shame upon me! the nurse (the same who stood listening near, who attended me into this country) could remember them more perfectly: it is from her I have learnt them since: she often sings them, even by herself.

Aesop. So shall others. There is much both in them and in thee to render them memorable.

Rhodope. Who flatters now?

Aesop. Flattery often runs beyond Truth, in a hurry to embrace her; but not here. The dullest of mortals, seeing and hearing thee, could never misinterpret the prophecy of the Fates.

If, turning back, I could overpass the vale of years, and could stand on the mountain-top, and could look again far before me at the bright ascending morn, we would enjoy the prospect together; we would walk along the summit hand in hand, O Rhodope, and we would only sigh at last when we found ourselves below with others.

THE EMPRESS CATHARINE AND PRINCESS DASHKOF

Catharine. Into his heart! into his heart! If he escapes we perish.

Do you think, Dashkof, they can hear me through the double door? Yes; hark! they heard me: they have done it.

What bubbling and gurgling! he groaned but once.

Listen! his blood is busier now than it ever was before. I should not have thought it could have splashed so loud upon the floor, although our bed indeed is rather of the highest.

Put your ear against the lock.

Dashkof. I hear nothing.

Catharine. My ears are quicker than yours, and know these notes better. Let me come . . . Hear nothing! You did not wait long enough, nor with coolness and patience. There! . . . there again! The drops are now like lead: every half-minute they penetrate the eider-down and the mattress. . . . How now! which of these fools has brought his dog with him? What tramping and lapping! The creature will carry the marks all about the palace with his feet and muzzle.

Dashkof. O heavens!

Catharine. Are you afraid?

Dashkof. There is a horror that surpasses fear, and will have none of it. I knew not this before.

Catharine. You turn pale and tremble. You should have supported me, in case I had required it

Dashkof. I thought only of the tyrant. Neither in life nor in death could any one of these miscreants make me tremble.

But the husband slain by his wife: . . . I saw not into my heart: I looked not into it: and it chastises me.

Catharine. Dashkof, are you then really unwell?

Dashkof. What will Russia, what will Europe say?

Catharine. Russia has no more voice than a whale. She may toss about in her turbulence; but my artillery (for now indeed I can safely call it mine) shall stun and quiet her.

Dashkof. God grant . . .

Catharine. I cannot but laugh at thee, my pretty Dashkof! God grant forsooth! He has granted all we wanted from him at present, the safe removal of this odious Peter.

Dashkof. Yet Peter loved *you*: and even the worst husband must leave surely the recollection of some sweet moments. The sternest must have trembled, both with apprehension and with hope, at the first alteration in the health of his consort; at the first promise of true union (imperfect without progeny.) Then there are thanks rendered together to heaven, and satisfactions communicated, and infant words interpreted; and when the one has failed to pacify the sharp cries of babyhood, pettish and impatient as sovereignty itself, the success of the other in calming it, and the unenvied triumph of this exquisite ambition, and the calm gazes that it wins upon it.

Catharine. | Are these, my sweet friend, your lessons from the stoic school? Are not they rather the pale-faced reflections of some kind epithalamiast from Livonia or Bessarabia? | Come, come away. I am to know nothing at present of the deplorable occurrence. Did not you wish his death?

Dashkof. It is not his death that shocks me.

Catharine. I understand you: beside, you said as much before.

Dashkof. I fear for your renown.

Catharine. And for your own good name,—ay, Dashkof?

Dashkof. He was not, nor did I ever wish him to be, my friend.

Catharine. You hated him.

Dashkof. Even hatred may be plucked up too roughly.

Catharine. Europe shall be informed of my reasons, if she should ever find out that I countenanced the conspiracy. She shall be persuaded that her repose made the step necessary; that my own life was in danger: that I fell upon my knees to soften the conspirators; that, only when I had fainted, the horrible deed was done. She knows already that Peter was always ordering new exercises and uniforms: and my ministers can evince at the first audience my womanly love of peace.

Dashkof. Europe may be more easily subjugated than duped.

Catharine. She shall be both, God willing.

Dashkof. The majesty of thrones will seem endangered by this open violence.

Catharine. The majesty of thrones is never in jeopardy by those who sit upon them. A sovereign may cover one with blood more safely than a subject can pluck a feather out of the cushion. It is only when the people does the violence that we hear an ill report of it. Kings poison and stab one another in pure legitimacy. Do your republican ideas revolt from such a doctrine?

Dashkof. I do not question this right of theirs, and never will oppose their exercise of it. But if you prove to the people how easy a matter it is to extinguish an emperor, and how pleasantly and prosperously we may live after it, is it not probable that they also will now and then try the experiment; particularly if anyone in Russia should hereafter hear of glory and honour, and how immortal are these by the consent of mankind, in all countries and ages, in him who releases the world, or any part of it, from a lawless and ungovernable

despot? The chances of escape are many, and the greater if he should have no accomplices. Of his renown there is no doubt at all: that is placed above chance and beyond time, by the sword he hath exercised so righteously.

Catharine. True; but we must reason like democrats no longer. Republicanism is the best thing we can have, when we cannot have power: but no one ever held the two together. I am now autocrat.

Dashkof. Truly then may I congratulate you. The dignity is the highest a mortal can attain.

Catharine. I know and feel it.

Dashkof. I wish you always may.

Catharine. I doubt not the stability of power: I can make constant both Fortune and Love. My Dashkof smiles at this conceit: she has here the same advantage, and does not envy her friend, even the autocracy.

Dashkof. Indeed I do, and most heartily.

Catharine. How!

Dashkof. I know very well what those intended who first composed the word: but they blundered egregiously. In spite of them, it signifies power over oneself; of all power the most enviable, and the least consistent with power over others.

I hope and trust there is no danger to you from any member of the council-board inflaming the guards or other soldiery.

Catharine. The members of the council-board did not sit *at* it, but *upon* it, and their tactics were performed cross-legged. What partisans are to be dreaded of that commander-in-chief, whose chief command is over pantaloons and facings, whose utmost glory is perched on loops and feathers, and who fancies that battles are to be won rather by pointing the hat than the cannon?

Dashkof. Peter was not insensible to glory: few men are: but wiser heads than his have been perplexed in the road to

it, and many have lost it by their ardour to attain it. I have always said that, unless we devote ourselves to the public good, we may perhaps be celebrated: but it is beyond the power of Fortune, or even of Genius, to exalt us above the dust.

Catharine. Dashkof, you are a sensible sweet creature, but rather too romantic on *principle*, and rather too visionary on glory. I shall always both esteem and love you; but no other woman in Europe will be great enough to endure you, and you will really put the men *hors de combat*. Thinking is an enemy to beauty, and no friend to tenderness. Men can ill brook it one in another: in women it renders them what they would fain call scornful (vain assumption of high prerogative!), and what you would find bestial and outrageous. As for my reputation, which I know is dear to you. I can purchase all the best writers in Europe with a snuff-box each, and all the remainder with its contents. Not a gentleman of the Academy but is enchanted by a toothpick, if I deign to send it him. A brilliant makes me Semiramis, a watch-chain Venus, a ring Juno. Voltaire is my friend.

Dashkof. He was Frederick's.

Catharine. I shall be the *Pucelle* of Russia. No! I had forgotten . . . he has treated her scandalously.

Dashkof. Does your Majesty value the flatteries of a writer who ridicules the most virtuous and glorious of his nation? who crouched before that monster of infamy, Louis XV; and that worse monster, the king his predecessor? He reviled with every indignity and indecency the woman who rescued France, and who alone, of all that ever led the armies of that kingdom, made its conquerors the English tremble. Its monarchs and marshals cried and ran like capons, flapping their fine crests from wall to wall, and cackling at one breath defiance and surrender. The village girl drew them back into battle, and placed the heavens themselves against the

enemies of Charles. She seemed supernatural: the English recruits deserted: they would not fight against God.

Catharine. Fools and bigots!

Dashkof. The whole world contained none other, excepting those who fed upon them. The maid of Orleans was pious and sincere: her life asserted it; her death confirmed it. Glory to her, Catharine, if you love glory. Detestation to him who has profaned the memory of this most holy martyr, the guide and avenger of her king, the redeemer and saviour of her country.

Catharine. Be it so: but Voltaire buoys me up above some impertinent troublesome qualms.

Dashkof. If deism had been prevalent in Europe, he would have been the champion of Christianity: and if the French had been Protestants, he would have shed tears upon the papal slipper. He buoys up no one; for he gives no one hope. He may amuse: dullness itself must be amused indeed by the versatility and brilliancy of his wit. *γ λ ρ · ρ ι.*

Catharine. While I was meditating on the great action I have now so happily accomplished, I sometimes thought his wit feeble. This idea, no doubt, originated from the littleness of everything in comparison with my undertaking.

Dashkof. Alas! we lose much when we lose the capacity of being delighted by men of genius, and gain little when we are forced to run to them for incredulity.

Catharine. I shall make some use of my philosopher at Ferney. I detest him as much as you do; but where will you find me another who writes so pointedly? You really then fancy that people care for truth? Innocent Dashkof! Believe me, there is nothing so delightful in life as to find a liar in a person of repute. Have you never heard good folks rejoicing at it? or rather, can you mention to me any one who has not been in raptures when he could communicate such glad tidings? The goutiest man would go on foot without a crutch

to tell his friend of it at midnight; and would cross the Neva for the purpose, when he doubted whether the ice would bear him. Men in general are so weak in truth, that they are obliged to put their bravery under it, to prop it. Why do they pride themselves, think you, on their courage, when the bravest of them is, by many degrees, less courageous than a mastiff bitch in the straw? It is only that they may be rogues without hearing it, and make their fortunes without rendering an account of them.

Now we chat again as we used to do. Your spirits and your enthusiasm have returned. Courage, my sweet Dashkof; do not begin to sigh again. We never can want husbands while we are young and lively. Alas! I cannot always be so. Heigho! But serfs and preferment will do . . none shall refuse me at ninety . . Paphos or Tobolsk.

Have not you a song for me?

Dashkof. German or Russian?

Catharine. Neither, neither. Some frightful word might drop . . might remind me . . no, nothing shall remind me. French rather: French songs are the liveliest in the world.

Is the ^{from}rouge off my face?

Dashkof. It is rather in streaks and mottles, excepting just under the eyes, where it sits as it should do.

Catharine. I am heated and thirsty: I cannot imagine how: I think we have not yet taken our coffee . . . was it so strong? What am I dreaming of? I could eat only a slice of melon at breakfast; my duty urged me *then*; and dinner is yet to come. Remember, I am to faint at the midst of it when the intelligence comes in, or rather when, in despite of every effort to conceal it from me, the awful truth has flashed upon my mind. Remember too, you are to catch me, and to cry for help, and to tear those fine flaxen hairs which we laid up together on the toilet, and we are both

to be as inconsolable as we can be for the life of us. Not now, child, not now. Come, sing. I know not how to fill up the interval. Two long hours yet! how stupid and tiresome! I wish all things of the sort could be done and be over in a day. They are mightily disagreeable when by nature one is not cruel. People little know my character. I have the tenderest heart upon earth: I am courageous, but I am full of weakness: I possess in perfection the higher part of men, and, to a friend I may say it, the most amiable part of women. Ho! ho! at last you smile: now your thoughts upon that.

Dashkof. I have heard fifty men swear it.

Catharine. They lied, the knaves! I hardly knew them by sight. We were talking of the sad necessity . . . Ivan must follow next: he is heir to the throne. I have a wild, impetuous, pleasant little *protégé*, who shall attempt to rescue him, I will have him persuaded and incited to it, and assured of pardon on the scaffold. He can never know the trick we play him; unless his head, like a bottle of Bordeaux, ripens its contents in the sawdust. Orders are given that Ivan be dispatched at the first disturbance in the precincts of the castle; in short, at the fire of the sentry: but not now: another time: two such scenes together, and without some interlude, would perplex people.

I thought we spoke of singing: do not make me wait, my dearest creature! Now cannot you sing as usual, without smoothing your dove's throat with your handkerchief, and taking off your necklace? Give it me then; give it me: I will hold it for you: I must play with something.

Sing, sing; I am quite impatient.

AESCHINES AND PHOCION

Aeschines. O Phocion, again I kiss the hand that hath ever raised up the unfortunate.

Phocion, I know not, Aeschines, to what your discourse would tend.

Aeschines. Yesterday, when the malice of Demosthenes would have turned against me the vengeance of the people, by pointing me out as him whom the priestess of Apollo had designated, in declaring the Athenians were unanimous, one excepted; did you not cry aloud, *I am the man; I approve of nothing you do?* That I see you again, that I can express to you my gratitude, these are your gifts.

Phocion. And does Aeschines then suppose that I should not have performed my duty, whether he were alive or dead? To have removed from the envy of an ungenerous rival, and from the resentment of an inconsiderate populace, the citizen who possesses my confidence, the orator who defends my country, and the soldier who has fought by my side, was among those actions which are always well repaid. The line is drawn across the account: let us close it.

Aeschines. I am not insensible, nor have ever been, to the afflicted; my compassion hath been excited in the city and in the field; but when have I been moved, as I am now, to weeping? Your generosity is more pathetic than pity; and at your eloquence, stern as it is, O Phocion, my tears gush like those warm fountains which burst forth suddenly from some convulsion of the earth.

Immortal Gods! that Demades and Polyeuctus and Demosthenes should prevail in the council over Phocion! that

even their projects for a campaign should be adopted, in preference to that general's who hath defeated Philip in every encounter, and should precipitate the war against the advice of a politician, by whose presages and his only, the Athenians have never been deceived!

Phocion. It is true, I am not popular.

Aeschines. Become so! *Become popular.*

Phocion. It has been frequently and with impunity in my power to commit base actions; and I abstained: would my friend advise me at last to commit the basest of all? to court the suffrages of people I despise!

Aeschines. You court not even those who love and honour you. Thirty times and oftener have you been chosen to lead our armies, and never once were present at the election. Unparalleled glory! when have the gods shown anything similar among men! Not Aristides nor Epaminondas, the most virtuous of mortals, not Miltiades nor Cimon, the most glorious in their exploits, enjoyed the favour of Heaven so uninterruptedly. No presents, no solicitations, no flatteries, no concessions: you never even asked a vote, however duly, customarily, and gravely.

Phocion. The highest price we can pay for anything is, to ask it: and to solicit a vote appears to me as unworthy an action as to solicit a place in a will: it is not ours, and might have been another's.

Aeschines. A question unconnected with my visit now obtrudes itself; and indeed, Phocion, I have remarked heretofore that an observation from you has made Athenians, on several occasions, forget their own business and debates, and fix themselves upon it. What is your opinion on the right and expediency of making wills?

Phocion. That it is neither expedient nor just to make them; and that the prohibition would obviate and remove (to say nothing of duplicity and servility) much injustice and

discontent; the two things against which every legislator should provide the most cautiously. General and positive laws should secure the order of succession, as far as unto the grandchildren of brother and sister: beyond and out of these, property of every kind should devolve to the commonwealth. Thousands have remained unmarried, that, by giving hopes of legacies, they may obtain votes for public offices; thus being dishonest, and making others so, defrauding the community of many citizens by their celibacy, and deteriorating many by their ambition. Luxury and irregular love have produced in thousands the same effect. They care neither about offspring nor about offices, but gratify the most sordid passions at their country's most ruinous expense. If these two descriptions of citizens were prohibited from appointing heirs at their option, and obliged to indemnify the republic for their inutility and nullity, at least by so insensible a fine as that which is levied on them after death, the members would shortly be reduced to few, and much of distress and indigence, much of dishonour and iniquity, would be averted from the people of Athens.

Aeschines. But services and friendships . . .

Phocion. . . . are rewarded by friendships and services.

Aeschines. You have never delivered your opinion upon his subject before the people.

Phocion. While passions and minds are agitated, the fewer opinions we deliver before them the better. We have laws enough; and we should not accustom men to changes. Though many things might be altered and improved, yet alteration in state-matters, important or unimportant in themselves, is weighty in their complex and their consequences. A little car in motion shakes all the houses of a street: let it stand quiet, and you or I could almost bear it on our foot: it is thus with institutions.

Aeschines. On wills you have excited my inquiry rather

than satisfied it: you have given me new thoughts, but you have also made room for more.

Phocion. Aeschines, would you take possession of a vineyard or olive-ground which nobody had given to you?

Aeschines. Certainly not.

Phocion. Yet if it were bequeathed by will, you would?

Aeschines. Who would hesitate?

Phocion. In many cases the just man.

Aeschines. In some indeed.

Phocion. There is a parity in all between a will and my hypothesis of vineyard or olive-ground. Inheriting by means of a will, we take to ourselves what nobody has given.

Aeschines. Quite the contrary: we take what he has given who does not deprive himself of any enjoyment or advantage by his gift.

Phocion. Again I say, we take it, Aeschines, from no giver at all; for he whom you denominate the giver does not exist: he who does not exist can do nothing, can accept nothing, can exchange nothing, can give nothing.

Aeschines. He gave it while he was living, and while he had these powers and faculties.

Phocion. If he gave it while he was living, then it was not what lawyers and jurists and legislators call a will or testament, on which alone we spoke.

Aeschines. True; I yield.

Phocion. The absurdities we do not see are more numerous and greater than those we discover; for truly there are few imaginable that have not crept from some corner or other into common use, and these escape our notice by familiarity.

Aeschines. We pass easily over great inequalities, and smaller shock us. He who leaps down resolutely and with impunity from a crag of Lycabettos, may be lamed perhaps for life by missing a step in the descent from a temple.

Again, if you please, to our first question.

Phocion. I would change it willingly for another, if you had not dropped something out of which I collect that you think me too indifferent to the administration of public affairs. Indifference to the welfare of our country is a crime; but if our country is reduced to a condition in which the bad are preferred to the good, the foolish to the wise, hardly any catastrophe is to be deprecated or opposed that may shake them from their places.

Aeschines. In dangerous and trying times they fall naturally and necessarily, as flies drop out of a curtain let down in winter. Should the people demand of me what better I would propose than my adversaries, such are the extremities to which their boisterousness and levity have reduced us, I can return no answer. We are in the condition of a wolf biting off his leg to escape from the trap that has caught it.

Phocion. Calamities have assaulted mankind in so great a variety of attacks, that nothing new can be devised against them. He who would strike out a novelty in architecture, commits a folly in safety; his house and he may stand: he who attempts it in politics, carries a torch, from which at the first narrow passage we may expect a conflagration. Experience is our only teacher both in war and peace. As we formerly did against the Lacedemonians and their allies, we might by our naval superiority seize or blockade the maritime towns of Philip; we might conciliate Sparta, who has outraged and defied him; we might wait even for his death, impending from drunkenness, lust, ferocity, and inevitable in a short space of time from the vengeance to which they expose him at home. It is a dangerous thing for a monarch to corrupt a nation yet uncivilised; to corrupt a civilised one is the wisest thing he can do. α

Aeschines. I see no reason why we should not send an executioner to release him from the prison-house of his crimes,

with his family to attend him. Kings play at war unfairly with republics: they can only lose some earth and some creatures they value as little, while republics lose in every soldier a part of themselves. Therefore no wise republic ought to be satisfied, unless she bring to punishment the criminal most obnoxious, and those about him who may be supposed to have made him so, his counsellors and his courtiers. Retaliation is not a thing to be feared. You might as reasonably be contented with breaking the tables and chairs of a wretch who hath murdered your children, as with slaying the soldiers of a despot who wages war against you. The least you can do in justice or in safety, is, to demand his blood of the people who are under him, tearing in pieces the nest of his brood. The Locrians have admitted only two new laws in two hundred years; because he who proposes to establish or to change one, comes with a halter round his throat, and is strangled if his proposition is rejected. Let wars, which ought to be more perilous to the adviser, be but equally so: let those who engage in them perish if they lose, I mean the principals, and new wars will be as rare among others as new laws among the Locrians.

Phocion. Both laws and wars are much addicted to the process of generation. Philip, I am afraid, has prepared the Athenians for his government; and yet I wonder how, in a free state, any man of common sense can be bribed. The corrupter would only spend his money on persons of some calculation and reflection: with how little of either must those be endowed, who do not see that they are paying a perpetuity for an annuity! Suppose that they, amid suspicions both from him in whose favour, and from those to whose detriment, they betray, can enjoy everything they receive, yet what security have their children and dependents? Property is usually gained in hope no less of bequeathing than of enjoying it; how certain is it that these will lose more

than was acquired for them! If they lose their country and their laws, what have they? The bribes of monarchs will be discovered, by the receiver, to be like pieces of furniture given to a man who, on returning home, finds that his house, in which he intended to place them, has another master. I can conceive no bribery at all seductive to the most profligate, short of that which establishes the citizen bribed among the members of a hereditary aristocracy, which in the midst of a people is a kind of foreign state, where the spoiler and raptor may take refuge. Now Philip is not so inhuman, as, in case he should be the conqueror, to inflict on us so humiliating a punishment. Our differences with him are recent, and he marches from policy, not from enmity. The Lacedæmonians did indeed attempt it, in the imposition of the thirty tyrants; but such a monstrous state of degradation and of infamy roused us from our torpor, threw under us and beneath our view all other wretchedness, and we recovered (I wish we could retain it as easily!) our independence. What grieves you?

Aeschines. Oh! could I embody the spirit I receive from you, and present it in all its purity to the Athenians, they would surely hear me with as much attention, as that invoker and violator of the gods, Demosthenes, to whom my blood would be the most acceptable libation at the feasts of Philip. Pertinacity and clamorousness, he imagines, are tests of sincerity and truth; although we know that a weak orator raises his voice higher than a powerful one, as the lame raise their legs higher than the sound. He censures me for repeating my accusation; he talks of tautology and diffuseness; he who tells us gravely that a man had lived *many years*, and . . . what then? . . . that he was rather old when he died! Can anything be so ridiculous as the pretensions of this man, who, because I employ no action, says, *action is the first, the second, the third requisite of oratory*, while he himself is the

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

most ungraceful of our speakers, and, even in appealing to the gods, begins by scratching his head?

Phocion. This is surely no inattention or indifference to the powers above. Great men lose somewhat of their greatness by being near us; ordinary men gain much. As we are drawing nigh to humble buildings, those at a distance beyond them sink below: but we may draw so nigh to the grand and elevated as to take in only a small part of the whole. I smile at reflecting on the levity with which we contemporaries often judge of those authors whom posterity will read with most admiration: such is Demosthenes. Differ as we may from him in politics, we must acknowledge that no language is clearer, no thoughts more natural, no words more proper, no combinations more unexpected, no cadences more diversified and harmonious. Accustomed to consider as the best what is at once the most simple and emphatic, and knowing that what satisfies the understanding, conciliates the ear, I think him little if at all inferior to Aristoteles in style, though in wisdom he is as a mote to a sunbeam; and superior to my master Plato, excellent as he is; gorgeous indeed, but becomingly, like wealthy kings. Defective however and faulty must be the composition in prose, which you and I with our uttermost study and attention cannot understand. In poetry it is not exactly so: the greater share of it must be intelligible to the multitude; but in the best there is often an undersong of sense, which none beside the poetical mind, or one deeply versed in its mysteries, can comprehend. Euripides and Pindar have been blamed by many, who perceived not that the arrow drawn against them fell on Homer. The gods have denied to Demosthenes many parts of genius; the urbane, the witty, the pleasurable, the pathetic. But, O Aeschines! the tree of strongest fibre and longest duration is not looked up to for its flower nor for its leaf.

Let us praise, O Aeschines, whatever we can reasonably: nothing is less laborious or irksome, no office is less importunate or nearer a sinecure. Above others praise those who contend with you for glory, since they have already borne their suffrages to your judgment by entering on the same career. Deem it a peculiar talent, and what no three men in any age have possessed, to give each great citizen or great writer his just proportion of applause. A barbarian king or his eunuch can distribute equally and fairly beans and lentils but I perceive that Aeschines himself finds a difficulty in awarding just commendations.

A few days ago an old woman, who wrote formerly a poem on Codrus, such as Codrus with all his self-devotion would hardly have read to save his country, met me in the street, and taxed me with injustice toward Demosthenes.

'You do not know him,' said she; 'he has heart, and somewhat of genius; true he is singular and eccentric; yet I assure you I have seen compositions of his that do him credit. We must not judge of him from his speeches in public: there he is violent; but a billet of his, I do declare, is quite a treasure.'

Aeschines. What answer of yours could be the return for such silliness?

Phocion. 'Lady!' replied I, 'Demosthenes is fortunate to be protected by the same cuirass as Codrus.'

The commendations of these people are not always, what you would think them, left-handed and detractive: for singular must every man appear who is different from the rest; and he is most different from them who is most above them. If the clouds were inhabited by men, the men must be of other form and features than those on earth, and their gait would not be the same as upon the grass or pavement. Diversity no less is contracted by the habitations, as it were, and haunts, and exercises, of our minds. Singularity, when.

it is natural, requires no apology; when it is affected, is detestable. Such is that of our young people in bad handwriting. On my expedition to Byzantion, the city decreed that a cloak should be given me worth forty drachmas: and, when I was about to return, I folded it up carefully, in readiness for any service in which I might be employed hereafter. An officer, studious to imitate my neatness, packed up his in the same manner, not without the hope perhaps that I might remark it; and my servant, or his, on our return, mistook it. I sailed for Athens; he, with a detachment, for Heraclea; whence he wrote to me that he had sent my cloak, requesting his own by the first conveyance. The name was quite illegible, and the carrier, whoever he was, had pursued his road homeward: I directed it then, as the only safe way, if indeed there was any safe one, *to the officer who writes worst at Heraclea.*

Come, a few more words upon Demosthenes. Do not, my friend, inveigh against him, lest a part of your opposition be attributed to envy. How many arguments is it worth to him, if you appear to act from another motive than principle! True, his eloquence is imperfect: what among men is not? In his repartees there is no playfulness, in his voice there is no flexibility, in his action there is neither dignity nor grace: but how often has he stricken you dumb with his irony! how often has he tossed you from one hand to the other with his interrogatories! Concentrated are his arguments, select and distinct and orderly his topics, ready and unfastidious his expressions, popular his allusions, plain his illustrations, easy the swell and subsidence of his periods, his dialect purely Attic. Is this no merit? Is it none in an age of idle rhetoricians, who have forgotten how their fathers and mothers spoke to them?

Aeschines. But what repetitions!

Phocion. If a thing is good it may be repeated; not indeed

too frequently nor too closely, nor in words exactly the same. The repetition shows no want of invention: it shows only what is uppermost in the mind, and by what the writer is most agitated and inflamed.

Aeschines. Demosthenes tells us himself, that he has prepared fifty-six commencements for his future speeches: how can he foresee the main subject of them all? They are, indeed, all invectives against Philip: but does Demosthenes imagine that Philip is not greatly more fertile in the means of annoyance than any Athenian is in the terms of vituperation? And which gives most annoyance? Fire and sword ravage far and wide: the tongue cannot break through the shield nor extinguish the conflagration: it brings down many blows, but heals no wounds whatever.

Phocion. I perceive in the number of these overtures to the choruses of the Furies, a stronger argument of his temerity than your acuteness hath exposed. He must have believed that Philip could not conquer us before he had time enough to compose and deliver his fifty-six speeches. I differ from him widely in my calculation. But, returning to your former charge, I would rather praise him for what he has omitted, than censure him for what he has repeated.

Aeschines. And I too.

Phocion. Those words were spoken in the tone of a competitor rather than of a comrade, as you soon may be.

Aeschines. I am jealous then? Did I demonstrate any jealousy of him when I went into the Peloponnese, to second and propel the courage his representations of the common danger had excited? where I beheld the youths of Olynthus, sent as slaves and donatives to his partisans, in that country of degenerate and dastard Greeks! What his orations had failed to bring about, my energy and zeal, my sincerity and singleness of aim effected. The Athenians there followed me to the temple of Agraulos, and denounced in one voice the

most awful imprecations against the Peloponnesians corrupted by the gold of Macedon.

Phocion. You have many advantages over your rival: let him have some over you. There are merits which appear demerits to vulgar minds and inconsiderate auditors. Many in the populace of hearers and readers, want links and cramps to hold together the thoughts that are given them, and cry out if you hurry them on too fast. You must leap over no gap, or you leave them behind and startle them from following you. With them the pioneer is a cleverer man than the commander. I have observed in Demosthenes and Thucydides, that they lay it down as a rule, never to say what they have reason to suppose would occur to the auditor and reader, in consequence of anything said before, knowing every one to be more pleased and more easily led by us, when we bring forward his thoughts indirectly and imperceptibly, than when we elbow and outstrip them with our own. The sentences of your adversary are stout and compact as the Macedonian phalanx, animated and ardent as the sacred band of Thebes. Praise him, Aeschines, if you wish to be victorious; if you acknowledge you are vanquished, then revile him and complain. In composition I know not a superior to him; and in an assembly of the people he derives advantages from his defects themselves, from the violence of his action and from the vulgarity of his mien. Permit him to possess these advantages over you; look on him as a wrestler whose body is robust, but whose feet rest upon something slippery: use your dexterity, and reserve your blows. Consider him, if less excellent as a statesman, citizen, or soldier, rather as a genius or demon, who, whether beneficent or malignant, hath, from an elevation far above us, launched forth many new stars into the firmament of mind.

Aeschines. O, that we had been born in other days! The best men always fall upon the worst.

Phocion. The Gods have not granted us, Aeschines, the choice of being born when we would; that of dying when we would, they have. Thank them for it, as one among the most excellent of their gifts, and remain or go, as utility of dignity may require. Whatever can happen to a wise and virtuous man from his worst enemy, whatever is most dreaded by the inconsiderate and irresolute, has happened to him frequently from himself, and not only without his inconvenience, but without his observation. We are prisoners as often as we bolt our doors, exiles as often as we walk to Munychia, and dead as often as we sleep. It would be a folly and a shame to argue that these things are voluntary, and that what our enemy imposes are not: they should be the more if they befall us from necessity, unless necessity be a weaker reason than caprice. In fine, Aeschines, I shall then call the times bad when they make me so: at present they are to be borne, as must be the storm that follows them.

ADMIRAL BLAKE AND HUMPHREY BLAKE

Blake. Humphrey! it hath pleased God, upon this day, to vouchsafe unto the English arms a signal victory. Brother! it grieves my heart that neither of us can rejoice in it as we should do. Evening is closing on the waters: our crews are returning thanks and offering up prayers to the Almighty. Alas! alas! that we, who ought to be the most grateful for his protection, and for the spirit he hath breathed into our people, should be the only men in this vast armament whom he hath sorely chastened! that we of all others should be ashamed to approach the throne of grace among our countrymen and comrades! There are those who accuse you, and they are brave and honest men . . . there are those, O Humphrey! Humphrey! . . . was the sound ever heard in our father's house? . . . who accuse you, brother! brother! . . . how can I ever find utterance for the word? . . . yea of cowardice.

Stand off! I want no help: let me be.

Humphrey. Today, for the first time in my life, I was in the midst of many ships of superior force firing upon mine, at once and incessantly.

Blake. The very position where most intrepidity was required. Were none with you? were none in the same danger? Shame! Shame! You owed many an example, and you defrauded them of it. They could not gain promotion, the poor seamen! they could not hope for glory in the wide world: example they might have hoped for. You would not have robbed them of their prize-money . . .

Humphrey. Brother! was ever act of dishonesty imputed to a Blake?

Blake. . . . Until now. ' You have robbed them even of the chance they had of winning it: you have robbed them of the pride, the just and chastened pride, awaiting them at home: you have robbed their children of their richest inheritance, a father's good repute.

Humphrey. Despite of calumniators, there are worthy men ready to speak in my favour, at least in extenuation . . .

Blake. I will hear them, as becomes me, although I myself am cognizant of your default; for during the conflict how anxiously, as often as I could, did I look toward your frigate! Especial care could not be fairly taken that aid at the trying moment should be at hand: other vessels were no less exposed than yours; and it was my duty to avoid all partiality in giving my support.

Humphrey. Grievous as my shortcoming may be, surely I am not precluded from what benefit the testimony of my friends may afford me.

Blake. Friends . . . ah thou hast many Humphrey! and many hast thou well deserved. In youth, in boyhood, in childhood, thy honied temper brought ever warm friends about thee. Easiness of disposition conciliates bad and good alike: it draws affections to it, and relaxes enmities: but that same easiness renders us, too often, negligent of our graver duties. God knows, I may without the same excuse (if it is any) be impeached of negligence in many of mine; but never where the honour or safety of my country was concerned. Wherefore the Almighty's hand, in this last battle, as in others no less prosperous, hath conducted and sustained me.

Humphrey! did thy heart wax faint within thee through want of confidence in our sole Deliverer?

Humphrey. Truly I have no such plea.

Blake. It were none; it were an aggravation.

Humphrey. I confess I am quite unable to offer any adequate defence for my backwardness, my misconduct. Oh!

could the hour return, the battle rage again. How many things are worse than death! how few things better! I am twelve years younger than you are, brother, and want your experience.

Blake. Is that your only want? Deplorable is it to know, as now I know, that you will never have it, and that you will have a country which you can never serve.

Humphrey. Deplorable it is indeed. God help me!

Blake. Worse evil soon may follow; worse to me, remembering thy childhood. Merciful Father! after all the blood that hath been shed this day, must I devote a brother's?

Humphrey. O Robert! always compassionate, always kind and generous! do not inflict on yourself so lasting a calamity, so unavailing a regret! Listen! . . . not to me . . . but listen. I hear under your bow the sound of oars. I hear them drawn into boats; verily do I believe that several of the captains are come to intercede for me, as they said they would do.

Blake. Intercession is vain. Honourable men shall judge you. A man to be honourable must be strictly just, at the least. Will brave men spare you? It lies with them. Whatever be their sentence, my duty is (God give me strength!) to execute it.

[Officers come aboard.]

Gentlemen! Who sent for you?

Senior Officer. General! we, the captains of your fleet, come before you upon the most painful of duties.

Blake (to himself). I said so: his doom is sealed. (*To Senior Officer.*) Speak, Sir! speak out, I say. A man who hath fought so bravely as you have fought to-day ought never to hesitate and falter.

Senior Officer. General! we grieve to say that Captain Humphrey Blake, commanding a frigate in the service of the Commonwealth, is accused of remissness in his duty.

Blake. I know it. Where is the accuser? What! no answer from any of you? Then I am he. Captain Humphrey

ADMIRAL BLAKE AND HUMPHREY BLAKE

Blake is here impleaded of neglecting to perform his uttermost in the seizure or destruction of the enemy's galloons. Is the crime . . write it, write it down! . . no need to speak it here . . capital? Negligence? no worse? but worse can there be?

Senior Officer. We would humbly represent . .

Blake. Representations, if made at all, must be made elsewhere. He goes forthwith to England. Return each of you to his vessel. Delinquency, grave delinquency, there hath been, of what nature and to what extent you must decide. Take him away. (*Aloné.*) Just God! am I the guilty man, that I should drink to the very dregs such a cup of bitterness?

Forgive, forgive, O Lord! the sinful cry of thy servant! Thy will be done! Thou hast shown thy power this day, O Lord! now show, and make me worthy of, thy mercy!

THE LADY LISLE AND ELIZABETH GAUNT

Lady Lisle. Madam, I am confident you will pardon me; for affliction teaches forgiveness.

Elizabeth Gaunt. From the cell of the condemned we are going, unless my hopes mislead me, where alone we can receive it. ~~forgiveness~~

Tell me, I beseech you, lady! in what matter or manner do you think you can have offended a poor sinner such as I am. Surely we come into this dismal place for our offences; and it is not here that any can be given or taken.

Lady Lisle. Just now, when I entered the prison, I saw your countenance serene and cheerful; you looked upon me for a time with an unaltered eye: you turned away from me, as I fancied, only to utter some expressions of devotion; and again you looked upon me; and tears rolled down your face. Alas! that I should, by any circumstance, any action or recollection, make another unhappy. Alas! that I should deepen the gloom in the very shadow of death.

Elizabeth Gaunt. Be comforted: you have not done it. Grief softens and melts and flows away with tears.

I wept because another was greatly more wretched than I myself. I wept at that black attire; at that attire of modesty and of widowhood.

Lady Lisle. It covers a wounded, almost a broken heart: an unworthy offering to our blessed Redeemer.

Elizabeth Gaunt. In his name let us now rejoice! Let us offer our prayers and our thanks at once together! We may yield up our souls perhaps at the same hour.

Lady Lisle. Is mine so pure? Have I bemoaned, as I

should have done, the faults I have committed? Have my sighs arisen for the unmerited mercies of my God? and not rather for him, the beloved of my heart, the adviser and sustainer I have lost!

Open, O gates of Death!

Smile on me, approve my last action in this world, O virtuous husband! O saint and martyr! my brave, compassionate, and loving Lisle!

Elizabeth Gaunt. And cannot you too smile, sweet lady? are not you with him even now? Doth body, doth clay, doth air, separate and estrange free spirits? Bethink you of his gladness, of his glory; and begin to partake them.

Oh! how could an Englishman, how could twelve, condemn to death, condemn to so great an evil as they thought it and may find it, this innocent and helpless widow!

Lady Lisle. Blame not *that* jury! blame not the jury which brought against me the verdict of guilty. I was so: I received in my house a wanderer who had fought under the rash and giddy Monmouth. He was hungry and thirsty, and I took him in. My Saviour had commanded, my king had forbidden it.

Yet the twelve would not have delivered me over to death, unless the judge had threatened them with an accusation of treason in default of it. Terror made them unanimous: they redeemed their properties and lives at the stated price.

Elizabeth Gaunt. I hope at least the unfortunate man, whom you received in the hour of danger, may avoid his penalty.

Lady Lisle. Let us hope it.

Elizabeth Gaunt. I too am imprisoned for the same offence; and I have little expectation that he who was concealed by me hath any chance of happiness, although he hath escaped. Could I find the means of conveying to him a small pittance, I should leave the world the more comfortably.

Lady Lisle. Trust in God; not in one thing or another, but in all. Resign the care of this wanderer to *his* guidance.

Elizabeth Gaunt. He abandoned that guidance.

Lady Lisle. Unfortunate! how can money then avail him!

Elizabeth Gaunt. It might save him from distress and from despair, from the taunts of the hardhearted and from the inclemency of the godly.

Lady Lisle. In godliness, O my friend! there cannot be inclemency.

Elizabeth Gaunt. You are thinking of perfection, my dear lady; and I marvel not at it; for what else hath ever occupied your thoughts! but godliness, in almost the best of us, often is austere, often uncompliant and rigid, proner to reprove than to pardon, to drag back or thrust aside than to invyte and help onward.

~~Poor man!~~ I never knew him before: I cannot tell how he shall endure his self-reproach, or whether it will bring him to calmer thoughts hereafter.

Lady Lisle. I am not a busy idler in curiosity; nor, if I were, is there time enough left me for indulging in it; yet gladly would I learn the history of events, at the first appearance so resembling those in mine.

Elizabeth Gaunt. The person's name I never may disclose; which would be the worst thing I could betray of the trust he placed in me. He took refuge in my humble dwelling, imploring me in the name of Christ to harbour him for a season. Food and raiment were afforded him unsparingly; yet his fears made him shiver through them. Whatever I could urge of prayer and exhortation was not wanting: still, although he prayed, he was disquieted. Soon came to my ears the declaration of the king, that his majesty would rather pardon a rebel than the concealer of a rebel. The hope was a faint one: but it *was* a hope; and I gave it him. His thanksgivings were now more ardent, his prayers more

THE LADY LISLE AND ELIZABETH GAUNT

humble, and oftener repeated. They did not strengthen his heart: it was unpurified and unprepared for them. Poor creature! he consented with it to betray me; and I am condemned to be burnt alive. Can we believe, can we encourage the hope, that in his weary way through life he will find those only who will conceal from him the knowledge of this execution? Heavily, too heavily, must it weigh on so irresolute and infirm a breast.

Let it not move you to weeping.

Lady Lisle. It does not: oh! it does not.

Elizabeth Gaunt. What then?

Lady Lisle. Your saintly tenderness, your heavenly tranquillity.

* *Elizabeth Gaunt.* No, no: abstain! abstain! It was I who grieved: it was I who doubted. Let us now be firmer: We have both the same rock to rest upon. See! I shed no tears.

I saved his life, an unprofitable and (I fear) a joyless one: he, by God's grace, has thrown open to me, and at an earlier hour than ever I ventured to expect it, the avenue to eternal bliss.

Lady Lisle. O my good angel! that bestrewest with fresh flowers a path already smooth and pleasant to me, may those timorous men who have betrayed, and those misguided ones who have prosecuted us, be conscious on their death-beds that we have entered it! And they too will at last find rest.

GENERAL KLÉBER AND FRENCH OFFICERS

An English officer was sitting with his back against the base of the Great Pyramid. He sometimes looked toward those of elder date and ruder materials before him, sometimes was absorbed in thought, and sometimes was observed to write in a pocket-book with great rapidity.

‘If he were not writing,’ said a French naturalist to a young ensign, ‘I should imagine him to have lost his eyesight by the ophthalmia. He does not see us: level your rifle: we cannot find a greater curiosity.’

The arts prevailed: the officer slid with extended arms from his resting-place: the blood, running from his breast, was audible as a swarm of insects in the sand. No other sound was heard. Powder had exploded; life had passed away; not a vestige remained of either.

‘Let us examine his papers,’ said the naturalist.

‘Pardon me, sir,’ answered the ensign; ‘my first inquiry on such occasions is *what’s o’clock?* and afterward I pursue my mineralogical researches.’

At these words he drew forth the dead man’s watch, and stuck it into his sash, while with the other hand he snatched out a purse containing some zecchins: every part of the dress was examined, and not quite fruitlessly.

‘See! a locket with a miniature of a young woman!’ Such it was: a modest and lovely countenance.

‘Ha! ha!’ said the ensign; ‘a few touches, a very few touches; I can give them; and Adela will take this for me. Two inches higher, and the ball had split it: what a thoughtless man he was! There is gold in it too; it weighs heavy. Peste! an old woman at the back! grey as a cat.’

It was the officer's mother, in her old age, as he had left her. There was something of sweet piety, not unsaddened by presage, in the countenance. He severed it with his knife, and threw it into the bosom of her son. Two foreign letters and two pages in pencil were the contents of the pocket-book. Two locks of hair had fallen out: one rested on his eyelashes, for the air was motionless; the other was drawn to the earth by his blood.

The papers were taken to General Kléber by the naturalist and his associate, with a correct recital of the whole occurrence, excepting the appendages of watch, zecchins, and locket.

'Young man,' said Kléber gravely, 'is this a subject of merriment to you? Who knows whether you or I may not be deprived of life as suddenly and unexpectedly? He was not your enemy: perhaps he was writing to a mother or sister. God help them! these suffer most from war. The heart of the far-distant is the scene of its most cruel devastations. Leave the papers: you may go: call the interpreter.'

He entered.

'Read this letter.'

My adored Henry . . .

'Give it me,' cried the general; he blew a strong fire from his pipe and consumed it.

'Read the other.'

My kind-hearted and beloved son . . .

'Stop: read the last line only.'

The interpreter answered, 'It contains merely the name and address.'

'I ask no questions: read them, and write them down legibly.'

He took the paper, tore off the margin, and placed the line in his snuff-box.

‘Give me that paper in pencil, with the mark of sealing-wax on it.’

He snatched it, shook some snuff upon it, and shrunk back. It was no sealing-wax: it was a drop of blood; one from the heart; one only; dry, but seeming fresh.

‘Read.’

‘Yes my dear mother, the greatest name that exists among mortals is that of Sydney. He who now bears it in the front of battle could not succour me: I had advanced too far: I am however no prisoner. Take courage, my too fond mother: I am among the Arabs, who detest the French: they liberated me. They report, I know not upon what authority, that Bonaparte has deserted his army, and escaped from Egypt.’

‘Stop instantly,’ cried Kléber, rising. ‘Gentlemen,’ added he to his staff-officers, ‘my duty obliges me to hear this unbecoming language on your late commander-in-chief: retire you a few moments. . . . Continue.’

‘He hates every enemy according to his courage and his virtues: he abominates what he cannot debase, at home or abroad.’

‘Oh!’ whispered Kléber to himself, ‘he knows the man so well.’

‘The first then are Nelson and Sir Sydney Smith, whose friends could expect no mercy at his hands. If the report be anything better than an Arabian tale, I will surrender myself to his successor as prisoner of war, and perhaps may be soon exchanged. How will this little leaf reach you? God knows how and when!’

‘Is there nothing else to examine?’

‘One more leaf.’

‘Read it.’

WRITTEN IN ENGLAND ON THE BATTLE OF ABOUKIR

Land of all marvels in all ages past,
Egypt, I hail thee from a far-off shore,
I hail thee, doom'd to rise again at last,
And flourish, as in early youth, once more
How long hast thou lain desolate! how long
The voice of gladness in thy halls hath ceast!
Mute e'en as Memnon's lyre, the poet's song,
And half-suppress'd the chant of cloister'd priest.

Even he, loquacious as a vernal bird,
Love, in thy plains and in thy groves is dumb,
Nor on thy thousand Nile-fed streams is heard
The reed that whispers happier days to come

O'er cities shadowing some dread name divine
Palace and fane return the hyena's cry,
And hoofless camels in long single line
Stalk slow, with foreheads level to the sky

No errant outcast of a lawless isle,
Mocker of heaven and earth, with vows and prayers,
Comes thy confiding offspring to beguile,
And rivet to his wrist the chain he wears.

Britain speaks now, her thunder thou hast heard;
Conqueror in every land, in every sea;
Valour and Truth proclaim the almighty word,
And all thou ever hast been, thou shalt be.

‘Defender and passionate lover of thy country,’ cried Kléber, ‘thou art less unfortunate than thy auguries. Enthusiastic Englishman! to which of your conquests have ever been imparted the benefits of your laws? Your governors have not even communicated their language to their vassals. Nelson and Sydney are illustrious names; the vilest have often been preferred to them, and severely have they been punished for the importunity of their valour. We Frenchmen have undergone much: but throughout the whole territory of France, throughout the range of all her new dominions, not

a single man of abilities has been neglected. Remember this, ye who triumph in our excesses. Ye who dread our example, speak plainly; is not this among the examples ye are the least inclined to follow?

‘Call my staff and a file of soldiers.’

‘Gentlemen, he who lies under the pyramid, seems to have possessed a vacant mind and full heart, qualities unfit for a spy: indeed he was not one. He was the friend and companion of that Sydney Smith who did all the mischief at Toulon, when Elliot fled from the city, and who lately, you must well remember, broke some of our pipes before Acre . . . a ceremony which gave us to understand, without the formalities of diplomacy, that the Grand Signor declines the honour of our company to take our coffee with him at Constantinople.’

Then turning to the file of soldiers, ‘A body lies under the Great Pyramid: go, bury it six feet deep. If there is any man among you capable of writing a good epitaph, and such as the brave owe to the brave, he shall have my authority to carve it upon the Great Pyramid, and his name may be brought back to me.’

‘Allow me ---- honour,’ said a lieutenant; ‘I fly to obey.’

‘Perhaps,’ replied the commander-in-chief, ‘it may not be amiss to know the character, the adventures, or at least the name’ . . .

‘No matter, no matter, my general.’

‘Take them however,’ said Kléber, holding a copy, ‘and try your wits.’

‘General,’ said Menou smiling, ‘you never gave a command more certain to be executed. What a blockhead was that king, whoever he was, who built so enormous a monument for a wandering Englishman!’

MARY AND BOTHWELL

Mary. Bothwell! Bothwell! what would you have? I can hardly believe my senses. It was wrong, it was very wrong indeed, to commit such an outrage. You forget my condition, my station, and what you owe me . . the allegiance, the duty . .

Bothwell. Nay, nay, my gracious queen! I thought of nothing else all our ride. What a sweet fresh colour it has given my royal mistress! O! could the ugly Elizabeth but see it! I should hail you queen of England the next hour.

Mary. How dare you call my cousin ugly? and to my face! And do you think she would give the crown of England to look at me? O you silly man! But what can you mean?

Bothwell. I mean, she would burst and crack at it, like a dry and gnarly log of mountain-ash on a Christmas hearth.

Mary. At me! at my colour! I cannot help laughing at your absurdity, most wicked, flattering, deceiving creature!

Bothwell. I flatter! I deceive! I never try to do what I am likely to fail in: here I must: here all must.

Mary. I wish you had indeed failed altogether.

Bothwell. So then, my royal dove! I did not quite?

Mary. Impudent man! go away.

Ah Bothwell! you are now a traitor after this. They would treat you like one. The laws call it abduction . . and God knows what beside.

Bothwell. Treat me like a traitor! me! the truest man among them. Yea, if I would let them, and this fair hand could sign it.

Mary. O heaven! Do not talk so; you make me very sad. I will never be so cruel to you as you have been to me.

Bothwell. The laws too; the laws forsooth! Neither in our country, nor in any other, do the laws touch anything higher than the collar of the most diminutive thief: and a lawyer is always at hand to change his coat and character with him for a groat.

Mary. With what derision and scorn you speak of laws and lawyers! You little know how vindictive they are.

Bothwell. Faith! we are not well acquainted; but I know enough of them to know that.

Mary. Are not you afraid?

Bothwell. I tremble in the presence of majesty and beauty. Where they are, there lies my law. I do confess I am afraid, and hugely; for I feel hard knockings (there must surely be all the Pandects) where my heart was lately.

Mary. You never had any heart, or you would not have treated me in this manner.

Bothwell. You shall want nothing with me: you shall never pine after the past.

Mary. Ah but! ah but! indeed, indeed, good Bothwell! he was very handsome; and you must acknowledge it . . if he had only been less cross and jealous and wayward and childish . .

Bothwell. Too childish by half for you, fair lady! and he was all those other little things beside.

Mary. What is over is over! God forgive you, bad man! Sinner! serpent! it was all you. And you dare smile! Shame upon you, varlet! Yes; now you look as you should do. Nobody ought to be more contrite. You may speak again, if you will only speak to the purpose. Come: no wicked thoughts! I mean if you will speak reasonably. But you really are a very, very wicked man indeed.

Bothwell. Happy the man who hears those blessed words!

they grow but on soft sweet lips, fresh pouting from ardent pressure.

Mary. If you presume to talk so, I will kill myself Are you not ashamed?

Bothwell. My blushes quite consume me: I feel my hair crackle on my head: my beard would burn my fingers.

Mary. I will not laugh, sirrah!

Bothwell. No, my most gracious lady! in mercy stop half-way! that smile is quite sufficient.

Mary. Do you fancy I am capable of smiling? I am quite serious. You have carried me away, and now you have nothing to do but to take me back again.

Bothwell. It would be dangerous: you have too many enemies.

Mary. I do not mind them while you are with me. Am I wild? You have frightened me so I scarcely know what I say.

Bothwell. A part of your understanding, most gracious lady! seems at last to have fallen on me.

Mary. Whither now would you carry me? You know it is quite against my will: absolute downright force.

Bothwell. Pardon, sweet lady! pardon my excess of zeal and devotion, my unutterable . .

Mary. What?

Bothwell. Love.

Mary. A subject's is loyalty. Love indeed!

Bothwell. Let me perish, but not against an iceberg.

Mary. Ah, bold cruel man! this is scoffing. Does it end so!

Bothwell. Nay, never let it end so; never let it end at all; let one thing under heaven be eternal.

Mary. As if I, so helpless a creature, could order it.

Bothwell. What have the Powers above denied you?

Mary. Happiness, innocence, peace. No, they did not

used metal
for a coil
since

deny them. Bothwell! Bothwell! they were mine; were they not?

Bothwell. And good things they are, no doubt; but there are other good things beside; all which you possess, and these too. These should not always be shut up in the casket. Where there are peace and happiness, there is sure to be innocence; for what else can any one wish? but those who can bring them into hearts of others, and will not, I never will call innocent. I do not remember that any living person has entreated me and met with a refusal.

Mary. Ah! such men may be beloved, but cannot love. What is that to me? It is unbecoming in me to reason with a profligate, or to listen any longer. You have often run then into such courses?

Bothwell. Alas! from my youth upward I have always been liable to these paroxysms.

Mary. For shame! I do not understand a single word of what you are saying. Again I ask you, and I insist upon an answer, whither are you conducting me?

Bothwell. To freedom, to safety, to the protection of a dutiful subject, to the burning heart of gallant man.

Mary. I am frightened out of my senses at the mere mention of any such things. What can you possibly mean? I never knew the like. I will not hear of it, you rebel! And you dare already . . .

Bothwell. Do you look so sternly on me, when you yourself have reduced me to this extremity? And now, worse! worse! do you deprive me of the last breath, by turning away from me those eyes, the bright unerring stars of my destiny?

Mary. If they had any power (but they have none!) I would strike you almost dead with them for that audacity? Again? O madman! madman! madman!

Bothwell. To mistake the lips for the hand! hallucination!

Mary. Now if you should (and you must!) be overtaken!

Bothwell. You would deliver me up to death and ignominy?

Mary. Our pure religion teaches us forgiveness.

Bothwell.

Then by my troth is it pure and bright
As a ~~pewter~~ plate on a Saturday night.

Here is a stave of my own to its honour and glory.

Mary. You sing too?

Bothwell. Yes; but I am no tenor.

Mary (aside). Ah! sweet soul! thou¹ wert gentle, fond, and faithful!

Bothwell (catching the last word). Capital for the faithful: and moreover it is the cleverest and rarest religion in the world. Few, even of the adventurously pious, so far interfere with the attributes of the Almighty as to take pardon into their own hands . . . unless for offences against others. There indeed they find as little difficulty in practising as in preaching.

Mary. I am quite edified at seeing you grow so serious. I once heard that you had abandoned the religion of your ancestors.

Bothwell. I did not abandon it; it dropped off me unaware. Now to prove my constancy, I never would take another. It is hard that a man like me should be accused of irreligion. They may do anything with me they like, if they will only let me be quiet. I am long-suffering: I never preach again.

Mary. Well; at least you have not fallen into heresy? you are not malignant?

Bothwell. By Jupiter! no; neither the one nor the other. Sweet gracious lady! how could you suspect me?

Mary. Because you men are so violent and so fond of change. You will never hear reason; you will never do your duty.

¹ Thinking of Rizzio

Bothwell. By the stars above! I will do mine before I ever presume to pray again.

Mary. And so, you dare to swear and laugh in my presence! I do really think, Bothwell, you are one of the most impudent men I ever met withal.

Bothwell. Ah, my beloved lady!

Mary. Stop, stop! I shall not let you say that.

Bothwell. My most gracious queen and mistress!

Mary. You are now, I believe, within the rules and regulations . . . that is, if you would not look up to me in such a very odd way. Modest men always look down on the eye-lashes, not between them.

Bothwell. Happy the modest men, if they do.

Mary. There! now you look exactly as you should always.

Bothwell. Faint as I am and sinking betwixt fear and love, I feel that, by thus taking my hand, your Highness in part forgives and entirely pities the most unfortunate of your servants. For surely he is the most unfortunate, who, having ventured the most to serve you, has given you thereby the most offence. I do not say I hazarded my freedom; it was lost when I first beheld you: I do not say I hazarded my life; I had none until to-day; and who dares touch it on the altar where I devote it? Lady! vouchsafe to hear me!

Mary. What a rough hand you have, Bothwell! what a heavy one! and (holy Virgin!) what a vastly broad one; it would cover I don't know what! and what a briary bower of hair over-arching it! Curious! it is quite red all over; everywhere but where there is this long scar; and these two ugly warts. Do I hurt you?

Bothwell. My heart and every fibre feel it, but can well bear it.

Mary. How much whiter the back of the hand is, for a moment, by just passing two fingers over it! look! But really warts are frightful things; and scars not much better. And

yet there are silly girls who, when they have nothing else to think about, could kiss them.

Bothwell. Ay, ay; but be girls as silly as they will, I never let them play such idle tricks with me.

Mary. I am glad to hear it: I fancied you had said something very different: you must not joke; it vexes me.

Bothwell. The warts will vanish under the royal touch. As for the scar, I would not lose the scar for the crown of Scotland, in defence whereof I fairly won it.

Mary. O! you are a very brave man, but a very bold one.

Bothwell. Illiterate and ignorant as I am, I would gladly learn from the best-informed and most intellectual of God's creatures, where lies the difference.

Mary. I don't know, I don't know; I am quite bewildered. Move your hand off my knee. Do not lay your cheek there, sir!

O Bothwell! I am tired to death. Take me back! O take me back! pray do! if you have any pity.

Bothwell. Would your Highness be pleased to repose awhile, and remain by yourself in a chamber upstairs?

Mary. I think it might do me good.

Bothwell. May I order the trustiest of the handmaidens to attend your Highness?

Mary. You may. Go, go; I thought I desired you before not to look up at me in that manner. Thank you, gentle Bothwell! I did not speak too harshly, did I? If I did, you may kiss my hand.

Bothwell. If this scar and these warts (which are fast disappearing, I perceive) are become less frightful to your Highness, might the humblest of your servitors crave permission to conduct your Highness nigh unto the chamber-door?

Mary. Ah me! where are my own women? where are my ushers?

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

Bothwell. Your Highness, in all your wrongs and straits, has the appointment of one supernumerary.

Mary. Be it so: I cannot help myself, as you know; and the blame is all yours.

Bothwell. When your Highness is ready to receive the services of the handmaiden, how may it please your Highness that she shall know it?

Mary. Let her tap twice with her knuckles: I can open the door myself . . . or she may.

Bothwell. My queen's most gracious commands shall be duly executed.

PETER THE GREAT AND ALEXIS

Peter. And so, after flying from thy father's house, thou hast returned again from Vienna. After this affront in the face of Europe, thou darest to appear before me?

Alexis. My emperor and father! I am brought before your majesty, not at my own desire.

Peter. I believe it well.

Alexis. I would not anger you.

Peter. What hope hadst thou, rebel, in thy flight to Vienna?

Alexis. The hope of peace and privacy; the hope of security; and above all things, of never more offending you.

Peter. That hope thou hast accomplished.

Thou imaginedst then that my brother of Austria would maintain thee at his court . . . speak!

Alexis. No, sir! I imagined that he would have afforded me a place of refuge.

Peter. Didst thou then take money with thee?

Alexis. A few gold pieces.

Peter. How many?

Alexis. About sixty.

Peter. He would have given thee promises for half the money: but the double of it does not purchase a house: ignorant wretch!

Alexis. I knew as much as that; although my birth did not appear to destine me to purchase a house anywhere; and hitherto your liberality, my father, hath supplied my wants of every kind.

Peter. Not of wisdom, not of duty, not of spirit, not of courage, not of ambition. I have educated thee among my

guards and horses, among my drums and trumpets, among my flags and masts. When thou wert a child, and couldst hardly walk, I have taken thee into the arsenal, though children should not enter, according to regulations; I have there rolled cannon-balls before thee over iron plates; and I have shown thee bright new arms, bayonets and sabres; and I have pricked the back of my hands until the blood came out in many places; and I have made thee lick it; and I have then done the same to thine. Afterward, from thy tenth year, I have mixed gunpowder in thy grog; I have peppered thy peaches; I have poured bilge-water (with a little good wholesome tar in it) upon thy melons; I have brought out girls to mock thee and cocker thee, and talk like mariners, to make thee braver. Nothing would do. Nay, recollect thee! I have myself led thee forth to the window when fellows were hanged and shot; and I have shown thee every day the halves and quarters of bodies; and I have sent an orderly or chamberlain for the heads; and I have pulled the cap up from over the eyes; and I have made thee, in spite of thee, look steadfastly upon them; incorrigible coward!

And now another word with thee about thy scandalous flight from the palace; in time of quiet too! To the point! did my brother of Austria invite thee? Did he, or did he not?

Alexis. May I answer without doing an injury or disservice to his Imperial Majesty?

Peter. Thou mayest. What injury canst thou or any one do, by the tongue, to such as he is?

Alexis. At the moment, no; he did not. Nor indeed can I assert that he at any time invited me: but he said he pitied me.

Peter. About what? hold thy tongue: let that pass. Princes never pity but when they would make traitors: then their hearts grow tenderer than tripe. He pitied thee, kind soul, when he would throw thee at thy father's head; but finding

thy father too strong for him, he now commiserates the parent, laments the son's rashness and disobedience, and would not make God angry for the world. At first, however, there must have been some overture on his part; otherwise thou art too shamefaced for intrusion. Come . . thou hast never had wit enough to lie . . tell me the truth, the whole truth.

Alexis. He said that, if ever I wanted an asylum, his court was open to me.

Peter. Open! so is the tavern; but folks pay for what they get there. Open truly! and didst thou find it so?

Alexis. He received me kindly.

Peter. I see he did. *soft*

Alexis. Derision, O my father, is not the fate I merit.

Peter. True, true! it was not intended.

Alexis. Kind father! punish me then as you will.

Peter. Villain! wouldst thou kiss my hand too? Art thou ignorant that the Austrian threw thee away from him, with the same indifference as he would the outermost leaf of a sandy sunburnt lettuce?

Alexis. Alas! I am not ignorant of this.

Peter. He dismissed thee at my order. If I had demanded from him his daughter, to be the bedfellow of a Kalmuc, he would have given her, and praised God.

Alexis. O father! is his baseness my crime?

Peter. No; thine is greater. Thy intention, I know, is to subvert the institutions it has been the labour of my lifetime to establish. Thou hast never rejoiced at my victories.

Alexis. I have rejoiced at your happiness and your safety.

Peter. Liar! coward! traitor! when the Polanders and Swedes fell before me, didst thou from thy soul congratulate me? Didst thou get drunk at home or abroad, or praise the Lord of Hosts and Saint Nicolas? Wert thou not silent and civil and low spirited?

Alexis. I lamented the irretrievable loss of human life; I lamented that the bravest and noblest were swept away the first; that the gentlest and most domestic were the earliest mourners; that frugality was supplanted by intemperance; that order was succeeded by confusion; and that your majesty was destroying the glorious plans you alone were capable of devising.

Peter. I destroy them! how? Of what plans art thou speaking?

Alexis. Of civilising the Muscovites. The Polanders in part were civilised: the Swedes more than any other nation on the continent; and so excellently versed were they in military science, and so courageous, that every man you killed cost you seven or eight.

Peter. Thou liest; nor six. And civilised forsooth! Why, the robes of the metropolitan, him at Upsal, are not worth three ducats, between Jew and Livornese. I have no notion that Poland and Sweden shall be the only countries that produce great princes. What right have they to such as Gustavus and Sobieski? Europe ought to look to this, before discontent becomes general, and the people does to us what we have the privilege of doing to the people. I am wasting my words: there is no arguing with positive fools like thee. So thou wouldst have desired me to let the Polanders and Swedes lie still and quiet! Two such powerful nations!

Alexis. For that reason and others I would have gladly seen them rest, until our own people had increased in numbers and prosperity.

Peter. And thus thou disputest my right, before my face, to the exercise of the supreme power.

Alexis. Sir! God forbid!

Peter. God forbid indeed! What care such villains as thou art what God forbids! He forbids the son to be disobedient to the father: he forbids . . he forbids . . twenty

things. I do not wish, and will not have, a successor who dreams of dead people.

Alexis. My father! I have dreamt of none such.

Peter. Thou hast; and hast talked about them . . . Scythians I think they call 'em. Now who told thee, Mr. Professor, that the Scythians were a happier people than we are; that they were inoffensive; that they were free; that they wandered with their carts from pasture to pasture, from river to river; that they traded with good faith; that they fought with good courage; that they injured none, invaded none, and feared none? At this rate I have effected nothing. The great founder of Rome, I heard in Holland, slew his brother for despising the weakness of his walls: and shall the founder of this better place spare a degenerate son, who prefers a vagabond life to a civilised one, a cart to a city, a Scythian to a Muscovite? Have I not shaved my people, and breeched them? Have I not formed them into regular armies, with bands of music and haversacks? Are bows better than cannon? shepherds than dragoons, mare's milk than brandy, raw steaks than broiled? Thine are tenets that strike at the root of politeness and sound government. Every prince in Europe is interested in rooting them out by fire and sword. There is no other way with false doctrines: breath against breath does little.

Alexis. Sire, I never have attempted to disseminate my opinions.

Peter. How couldst thou? the seed would fall only upon granite. Those, however, who caught it brought it to me.

Alexis. Never have I undervalued civilisation: on the contrary, I regretted whatever impeded it. In my opinion, the evils that have been attributed to it, sprang from its imperfections and voids; and no nation has yet acquired it more than very scantily.

Peter. How so? give me thy reasons,—thy fancies rather; for reason thou hast none.

Alexis. When I find the first of men, in rank and genius, hating one another, and becoming slanderers and liars in order to lower and vilify an opponent; when I hear the God of mercy invoked to massacres, and thanked for furthering what he reprobates and condemns,—I look back in vain on any barbarous people for worse barbarism. I have expressed my admiration of our forefathers, who, not being Christians, were yet more virtuous than those who are; more temperate, more just, more sincere, more chaste, more peaceable.

Peter. Malignant atheist!

Alexis. Indeed, my father, were I malignant I must be an atheist; for malignity is contrary to the command, and inconsistent with the belief, of God.

Peter. |Am I Czar of Muscovy, and hear discourses on reason and religion? from my own son too! No, by the Holy Trinity! thou art no son of mine.| If thou touchest my knee again, I crack thy knuckles with this tobacco-stopper: I wish it were a sledge-hammer for thy sake. Off, sycophant! Off, runaway slave!

Alexis. Father! father! my heart is broken! If I have offended, forgive me!

Peter. The state requires thy signal punishment.

Alexis. If the state requires it, be it so: but let my father's anger cease!

Peter. The world shall judge between us. I will brand thee with infamy.

Alexis. Until now, O father! I never had a proper sense of glory. Hear me, O Czar! let not a thing so vile as I am stand between you and the world! Let none accuse you!

Peter. Accuse me! rebel! Accuse me! traitor!

Alexis. Let none speak ill of you, O my father! The public voice shakes the palace; the public voice penetrates the grave;

it precedes the chariot of Almighty God, and is heard at the judgment seat.

Peter. Let it go to the devil! I will have none of it here in Petersburg. Our church says nothing about it; our laws forbid it. As for thee, unnatural brute, I have no more to do with thee neither!

Ho there! chancellor! What! come at last! Wert napping, or counting thy ducats?

Chancellor. Your majesty's will and pleasure!

Peter. Is the senate assembled in that room?

Chancellor. Every member, sire.

Peter. Conduct this youth with thee, and let them judge him: thou understandest me.

Chancellor. Your majesty's commands are the breath of our nostrils.

Peter. If these rascals are remiss, I will try my new cargo of Livonian hemp upon 'em.

Chancellor (returning). Sire! sire!

Peter. Speak, fellow! Surely they have not condemned him to death, without giving themselves time to read the accusation, that thou comest back so quickly.

Chancellor. No, sire! Nor has either been done.

Peter. Then thy head quits thy shoulders.

Chancellor. O sire!

Peter. Curse thy silly sires! what art thou about?

Chancellor. Alas! he fell.

Peter. Tie him up to thy chair then. Cowardly beast! what made him fall?

Chancellor. The hand of Death; the name of father.

Peter. Thou puzzlest me; prythee speak plainlier.

Chancellor. We told him that his crime was proven and manifest; that his life was forfeited.

Peter. So far, well enough.

Chancellor. He smiled.

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

Peter. He did! did he? Impudence shall do him little good. Who could have expected it from that smock-face! Go on: what then?

Chancellor. He said calmly, but not without sighing twice or thrice, 'Lead me to the scaffold: I am weary of life: nobody loves me.' I condoled with him, and wept upon his hand, holding the paper against my bosom. He took the corner of it between his fingers, and said, 'Read me this paper: read my death-warrant. Your silence and tears have signified it; yet the law has its forms. Do not keep me in suspense. My father says, too truly, I am not courageous: but the death that leads me to my God shall never terrify me.'

Peter. I have seen these white-livered knaves die resolutely: I have seen them quietly fierce like white ferrets, with their watery eyes and tiny teeth. You read it?

Chancellor. In part, sire! When he heard your majesty's name, accusing him of treason and attempts at rebellion and parricide, he fell speechless. We raised him up: he was motionless: he was dead!

Peter. Inconsiderate and barbarous varlet as thou art, dost thou recite this ill accident to a father! And to one who has not denied! Bring me a glass of brandy.

Chancellor. And it please your majesty, might I call a . . .
a . . .

Peter. Away, and bring it: scamper! All equally and alike shall obey and serve me.

Hearkye! bring the bottle with it: I must cool myself . . and . . hearkye! a rasher of bacon on thy life! and some pickled sturgeon, and some krout and caviar, and good strong cheese.

MIDDLETON AND MAGLIABECHI

Magliabechi. The pleasure I have enjoyed in your conversation, sir, induces me to render you such a service, as never yet was rendered by an Italian to a stranger.

Middleton. You have already rendered me several such, M. Magliabechi; nor indeed can any man of letters converse an hour with you, and not carry home with him some signal benefit.

Life in Italy.

Magliabechi. Your life is in danger, Mr Middleton.

Middleton. How! impossible! I offend no one, in public or in private: I converse with you only: I avoid all others, and, above all, the busy-bodies of literature and politics. I court no lady: I never go to the palace: I enjoy no favours: I solicit no distinctions: I am neither poet nor painter. Surely then I, if any one, should be exempt from malignity and revenge.

Magliabechi. To remove suspense, I must inform you that your letters are opened, and your writings read by the police. The servant whom you dismissed for robbery has denounced you.

Middleton. Was it not enough for him to be permitted to plunder me with impunity? does he expect a reward for this villany? will his word or his oath be taken?

Magliabechi. Gently, Mr Middleton. He expects no reward: he received it when he was allowed to rob you. He came recommended to you as an honest servant, by several noble families. He robbed them all; and a portion of what he stole was restored to them by the police, on condition that they should render to the Government a mutual service when called upon.

Middleton. Incredible baseness! Can you smile at it, M. Magliabechi! Can you have any communication with these wretches, these nobles, as you call them, this servant, this police!

Magliabechi. My opinion was demanded by my superiors, upon some remarks of yours on the religion of our country.

Middleton. I protest, sir, I copied them in great measure from the Latin work of a learned German.

Magliabechi. True: I know the book: it is entitled *Facetiae Facietiarum*. There is some wit and some truth in it; but the better wit is, the more dangerous is it; and Truth, like the Sun, coming down on us too directly, may give us a brain-fever.

In this country, Mr Middleton, we have jalousies not only to our windows but to our breast: we admit but little light to either, and we live the more comfortably for so doing. If we changed this custom, we must change almost every other; all the parts of our polity having been gradually drawn closer and closer, until at last they form an inseparable mass of religion, laws, and usages. For instance, we condemn as a dangerous error the doctrine of Galileo, that the earth moves about the sun; but we condemn rather the danger than the error of asserting it.

Middleton. Pardon my interruption. When I see the doctors of your church insisting on a demonstrable falsehood, have I not reason to believe that they would maintain others less demonstrable, and more profitable? All questions of politics, of morals, and of religion, ought to be discussed: but principally should it be examined whether our eternal happiness depends on any speculative point whatever; and secondly, whether those speculative points on which various nations insist as necessary to it, are well or ill founded. I would rather be condemned for believing that to kill an ibis is a sin, than for thinking that to kill a man is not. Yet the former opinion is ridiculed by all modern nations; while the

murder of men by thousands is no crime, provided they be flourishing and happy, or will probably soon become so; for then they may cause discontent in other countries, and indeed are likely to excite the most turbulence when they sit down together the most quietly.

Magliabechi. Let us rather keep within the tenets of our church.

Middleton. Some of them are important, some are not; and some appeared so in one age of the church, which were cast aside in another.

Magliabechi. Pray which were they?

Middleton. She now worships the blessed Virgin Mary: anciently she condemned the Collyridians, for doing it, and called them heretics. Was she infallible then? or is she now? Infants were formerly admitted by her to the Eucharist, and she declared that they could not be saved without it; she now decrees that the doctrine is false. Formerly it was her belief that, before the destruction of the world, Christ should reign upon earth a thousand years, and the saints under him: at present, she has no mind that either of them should be so near her. Although there are many things wherein much may be said on both sides, yet it is only on one side in any question that the same thing can be said.

Magliabechi. This is specious, and delivered temperately.

Middleton. Saint Augustine is esteemed among the infallible.

Magliabechi. Certainly; and with justice (a)

Middleton. He declares that the dead, even saints, are ignorant what the living do; even their own children; for the souls of the dead, he says, interfere not in the affairs of the living.

Magliabechi. This is strong; but divines can reconcile it with religion.

Middleton. What can they not?

Magliabechi. I will tell you what they cannot: and it is this on which I began our conversation.

Among your other works I find a manuscript on the inefficacy of prayer. I defended you to my superiors, by remarking that Cicero had asserted things incredible to himself, merely for the sake of argument, and had probably written them before he had fixed in his mind the personages to whom they should be attributed in his dialogues; that, in short, they were brought forward for no other purpose than discussion and explosion. This impiety was forgiven. But every man in Italy has a favourite saint, for whose honour he deems it meritorious to draw (I had almost said the sword) the stiletto. *a sword.*

Middleton. It would be safer to attempt dragging God from his throne, than to split a spangle on their petticoats, or to puff a grain of powder from their wigs: this I know. Nothing in my writings is intended to wound the jealousy of the Italians. Truth, like the juice of the poppy, in small quantities, calms men; in larger, heats and irritates them, and is attended by fatal consequences in its excess. For which reason, with plain ground before me, I would not expatiate largely; and I often made an argument, that offered itself, give way altogether and leave room for inferences. My treatise on prayer was not to be published in my lifetime.

Magliabechi. And why at any time? Supposing prayer to be totally inefficacious in the object, is not the mind exalted, the heart purified, are not our affections chastened, our desires moderated, our enjoyment enlarged by this intercourse with the Deity? And are not men the better, as certainly they are the happier, for a belief that he interferes in their concerns? They are persuaded that there is something conditional between them, and that, if they labour under the commission of crimes, their voice will be inaudible as the voice of one under the nightmare.

Middleton. I wished to demonstrate that we often treat God in the same manner as we should treat some doating or some passionate old man: we feign, we flatter, we sing, we cry, we gesticulate.

Magliabechi. Worship him in your own manner, according to the sense he has given you; and let those who cannot exercise that sense, rely upon those who can. Be convinced, Mr Middleton, that you never will supplant the received ideas of God: be no less convinced that the sum of your labours in this field will be to leave the ground loose beneath you, and that he who comes after you will sink. In sickness, in our last particularly, we all are poor wretches: we are nearly all laid on a level by it: the dry-rot of the mind supervenes, and loosens whatever was fixed in it, except religion. Would you be so inhuman as to tell a friend in this condition not to be comforted? Would you prove to him that the crucifix, which his wandering eye finds at last its resting place, is of the same material as his bedpost? Suppose a belief in the efficacy of prayer to be a belief altogether irrational . . . you may: I never can . . . suppose it to be insanity itself, would you, meeting a young man who had wandered over many countries in search of a father, until his intellects are deranged, and who, in the fullness of his heart, addresses an utter stranger as the lost parent, clings to him, kisses him, sobs upon his breast, and finds comfort only by repeating *father! father!* would you, Mr Middleton, say to this affectionate fond creature, *go home, sit quiet, be silent!* and persuade him that his father is lost to him?

Middleton. God forbid!

Magliabechi. You have done it: do it no more. The madman has not heard you; and the father will pardon you when you meet.

Middleton. Far be it from my wishes and from my thoughts to unhinge those portals through which we must

enter to the performance of our social duties: but I am sensible of no irreligion, I acknowledge no sorrow or regret, in having attempted to demonstrate that God is totally and far removed from our passions and infirmities, and that whatever seems fit to him, will never seem unfit in consequence of our entreaties. I would inculcate entire resignation to the divine decrees, acquiescence in the divine wisdom, confidence in the divine benevolence. There is something of frail humanity, something of its very decrepitude, in our ideas of God: We are foolish and ignorant in the same manner, and almost to the same degree, as those painters are, who append a grey beard to his chin, draw wrinkles across his brow, and cover him with a gaudy and flowing mantle.

Our Saviour does not command us to pray, although his example, for especial purposes, appears to countenance it. His nature, and the nature of his mission, might require this intercourse. He says only, 'when ye pray,' &c., or, in other words, 'if you will pray let your prayer be,' &c. For on more than one occasion, desirous as he was of interfering but little with established usages, he condemned the prayers of the Jews.

Magliabechi. They were too long.

Middleton. They were not longer (as far as I know) than those of other nations. In short, if we believe the essence of God to be immutable, we must believe his will to be so. It is insanity to imagine that his determination can be altered by our whims or wishes; therefore it is not only more wise but also more reverent to suppress them, both in action and in speech. Supposing him altered or moved by us, we suppose him subject to our own condition. If he pardons, he corrects his first judgment; he owns himself to have been wrong and hasty; than which supposition what impiety can be greater?

Magliabechi. Do you question everything that is not in the

form of syllogism, or enthymema, or problem with corollary and solution?

Middleton. I never said that what is indemonstrable must therefore be untrue: but whatever is indemonstrable may be questioned, and, if important, should be. We are not to tremble at the shaking of weak minds: Reason does not make them so: she, like Virtue, is debilitated by indulgences, and sickened to death by the blasts of heat and cold blown alternately from your church.

Magliabechi. Do you conceive God then to be indifferent to our virtues or vices, our obstinacy or repentance?

Middleton. I would not enter into such questions: and indeed I have always been slow to deliver my more serious opinions in conversation, feeling how inadequately any great subject must be discussed within such limits, and how presumptuous it would appear, in one like me, to act as if I had collected all that could be said, or even what could be said best, on the occasion. Neither to run against nor to avoid your interrogatory: there are probably those who believe that, in the expansion and improvement of our minds hereafter, they will be so sensitive to the good or evil we have done on earth, as to be rewarded or punished in the most just proportion, without any impulse given to, or suffered by, the First Cause and sole Disposer of things and of events. How rational may be this creed, I leave, with the other, to speculative men; wishing them to recollect that unseasonable and undue heat must warp the instrument by which alone their speculations can be becomingly and rightly made. If God is sensible to displeasure, which is a modification of pain, at the faults or vices of his creatures, he must suffer at once a myriad times more of it than any of them, and he must endure the same sufferings a myriad times longer.

Magliabechi. This hurts our common faith.

Middleton. Pass over what may offend your faith, common

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or private; mind only (which I am sure you will do) what may disturb the clearness of your conscience and impede the activity of your benevolence. Let us never say openly what may make a good man unhappy or unquiet, unless it be to warn him against what we know will make him more so; for instance, if you please, a false friend; or if you would rather, a teacher who, while he pretends to be looking over the lesson, first slips his hand into his scholar's pocket, then ties him adroitly to his chair by the coat-skirt, then, running off with his book, tells him to cry out if he dares, promises at last to give him ten better, and, if he should be hungry and thirsty, bids him never to mind it, for he will eat his dinner for him and drink his wine, and say a Latin grace.

FROM PERICLES AND ASPASIA

Aspasia to Cleone

I have asked Pericles to let me see all his speeches. He declared to me that he has kept no copies, but promised that he would attempt to recover some of them from his friends. I was disappointed and I grieved and told him I was angry with him. He answered thus, taking me by the hand,

‘So, you really are angry that I have been negligent in the preservation of my speeches, after all my labour in modelling and correcting them. You are anxious that I should be praised as a writer, by writers who direct the public in these matters. Aspasia! I know their value. Understand me correctly and comprehensively. I mean partly the intrinsic worth of their commendations, and partly (as we pay in the price of our utensils) the fashion. I have been accused of squandering away both the public money and my own: nobody shall ever accuse me of paying three obols for the most grandly embossed and most sonorous panegyric. I would excite the pleasure (it were too much to say admiration) of judicious and thoughtful men; but I would neither soothe nor irritate these busybodies. I have neither honey nor lime for ants. We know that good writers are often gratified by the commendation of bad ones; and that even when the learned and intelligent have brought the materials to crown their merits, they have looked toward the door at some petulant smirking page, for the thread that was to bind the chaplet. Little do I wish to hear what I am, much less what I am not. Enough for me to feel the consciousness and effect of health and strength: surely it is better

than to be told by those who salute me, that I am looking very well.

‘You may reply that the question turns not upon compliments, but upon censure.

‘Really I know not what my censurers may write, never having had the advantage of reading their lucubrations; all I know is this; if I am not *their* Pericles, I am at least the Pericles of Aspasia and the Athenians.’

Aspasia to Cleone

We were conversing on oratory and orators, when Anaxagoras said, looking at Pericles and smiling,

‘They are described by Hesiod in two verses, which he applies to himself and the poets:

Lies very like the truth we tell,
And, when we wish it, truth as well.’

Meton relaxed from his usual seriousness, but had no suspicion of the application, saying, ‘Cleverly applied indeed!’

Pericles enjoyed equally the simplicity of Meton and the slyness of Anaxagoras, and said, ‘Meton! Our friend Anaxagoras is so modest a man that the least we can do for him is to acknowledge his claims as heir general to Hesiod: see them registered.’

I have never observed the temper of Pericles either above or below the enjoyment of a joke; he invites and retaliates, but never begins, lest he should appear to take a liberty.

There are proud men of so much delicacy that it almost conceals their pride, and perfectly excuses it.

Meton never talks, but answers questions with great politeness, although with less clearness and precision than you would expect. I remarked to him, one evening, that mathematicians had great advantages over others in disputations, from the habitude they had acquired of exactness in solving their problems.

'We mathematicians,' answered he, 'lay claim to this precision. I need not mention to you, Aspasia, that of all the people who assemble at your house, I am the only one that ever wants a thought or word. We are exact in our own proper workmanship. Give me time, and we can discover what is false in logic; but I never was acquainted with a mathematician who was ready at correcting in himself a flaw of ratiocination, or who produced the fitting thing in any moderate time. Composition is quite beyond our sphere. I am not envious of others; but I often regret in myself that, while they are delivering their opinions freely and easily, I am arranging mine; and that, in common with all the mathematicians of my acquaintance, I am no prompt debater, no acute logician, no clear expositor, but begin in hesitation and finish in confusion.'

I assure you, Cleone, I have been obliged to give order and regularity to these few words of the wise contemplative Meton, and to remove from among them many that were superfluous and repeated. When he had paused, I told him I sometimes wished he would exercise his powerful mind in conversation.

'I have hardly time,' said he, 'for study, much less for disputation. Rarely have I known a disputant who, however dexterous, did not either drive by Truth or over her, or who stopped to salute her, unless he had something fine or novel to display. He would stumble over my cubes and spheres and I should leave my leg in his noose.'

'And yet Anaxagoras and you agree well together,' said I.

'Anaxagoras,' replied he, 'usually asks me short questions, and helps me himself to explain them. He comes to me when I am alone, and would find no pleasure in showing to others my perplexity. Seldom do I let him go again, until he has given me some help or some incitement in my studies. He suggests many things.'

'Silence, good Meton!' cried Anaxagoras, 'or I may begin to talk of a luminary whose light has not yet reached the earth.'

The three men smiled: they have some meaning uncommunicated to me. Perhaps it is a remark of Pericles, in encouragement of Anaxagoras, that, while others pass before us like a half-obol tow-link across a dark alley, and dazzle and disappear, his loftier light has not yet come down to the intellects of his fellow-citizens; or perhaps it may really have a reference to some discovery in astronomy.

Pericles goes in person to command the expedition against Samos. He promises me it will soon be ready to sail, and tells me to expect him back again within a few months. Artemon is preparing machines of great magnitude for the attack of the city. He teaches me that the Samians are brave and wealthy, and that no city is capable of such a resistance. Certainly never were such preparations. I hope at least that the report of them will detain your enemies at home, and at all events that, before they land, you will leave Miletus and come to me.[†] The war is very popular at Athens: I dare say it is equally so at Samos, equally so at Miletus. Nothing pleases men like renewing their ancient alliance with the brutes, and breaking off the more recent one with their fellow-creatures.

War is it, O grave heads! that ye
With stern and stately pomp decree?
Inviting all the gods from far
To join you in the game of war!
Have ye then lived so many years
To find no purer joy than tears?
And seek ye now the highest good
In strife, in anguish, and in blood?
Your wisdom may be more than ours,
But you have spent your golden hours,
And have methinks but little right
To make the happier fret and fight.

PERICLES AND ASPASIA

Ah! when will come the calmer day
When these dark clouds shall pass away?
When (should two cities disagree)
The young, the beauteous, and the free,
Rushing with all their force, shall meet
And struggle with embraces sweet,
Till they who may have suffer'd most
Give in and own the battle lost.

Philosophy does not always play fair with us. She often eludes us when she has invited us, and leaves us when she has led us the farthest way from home. Perhaps it is because we have jumped up from our seats at the first lesson she would give us, and the easiest, and the best. There are few words in the precept,

Give pleasure: receive it;

Avoid giving pain: avoid receiving it.

For the duller scholar, who may find it difficult to learn the whole, she cuts each line in the middle, and tells him kindly that it will serve the purpose, if he will but keep it in his memory.

ESSEX AND SPENSER

Essex. Instantly on hearing of thy arrival from Ireland, I sent a message to thee, good Edmund, that I might learn from one so judicious and dispassionate as thou art, the real state of things in that distracted country; it having pleased the queen's majesty to think of appointing me her deputy, in order to bring the rebellious to submission.

Spenser. Wisely and well considered; but more worthily of her judgment than her affection. May your lordship overcome, as you have ever done, the difficulties and dangers you foresee.

Essex. We grow weak by striking at random; and knowing that I must strike, and strike heavily, I would fain see exactly where the stroke shall fall.

Some attribute to the Irish all sorts of excesses; others tell us that these are old stories; that there is not a more inoffensive race of merry creatures under heaven, and that their crimes are all hatched for them here in England, by the incubation of printers' boys, and are brought to market at times of distressing dearth in news. From all that I myself have seen of them, I can only say that the civilised (I mean the richer and titled) are as susceptible of heat as iron, and as impenetrable to light as granite. The half-barbarous are probably worse; the utterly barbarous may be somewhat better. Like game-cocks, they must spur when they meet. One fights because he fights an Englishman; another because the fellow he quarrels with comes from a distant county; a third because the next parish is an eyesore to him, and his first-mate is from it. The only thing in which they all agree

as proper law is the tooth-for-tooth act. Luckily we have a bishop who is a native, and we called him before the queen. He represented to her majesty, that everything in Old Ireland tended to reproduce its kind; crimes among others; and he declared frankly, that if an honest man is murdered, or what is dearer to an honest man, if his honour is wounded in the person of his wife, it must be expected that he will retaliate. Her majesty delivered it as her opinion, that the latter case of vindictiveness was more likely to take effect than the former. But the bishop replied, that in his conscience he could not answer for either if the man was up. The dean of the same diocese gave us a more favourable report. Being a justice of the peace, he averred most solemnly that no man ever had complained to him of murder, excepting one who had lost so many fore-teeth by a cudgel that his deposition could not be taken exactly; added to which, his head was a little clouded with drunkenness; furthermore, that extremely few women had adduced sufficiently clear proofs of violence, excepting those who were wilful, and resisted with tooth and nail. In all which cases it was difficult, nay impossible, to ascertain which violence began first and lasted longest.

There is not a nation upon earth that pretends to be so superlatively generous and high-minded; and there is not one (I speak from experience) so utterly base and venal. I have positive proof that the nobility, in a mass, are agreed to sell, for a stipulated sum, all their rights and privileges, so much per man; and the queen is inclined thereunto. But would our parliament consent to pay money for a cargo of rotten pilchards? And would not our captains be readier to swamp than to import them? The noisiest rogues in that kingdom, if not quieted by a halter, may be quieted by making them brief-collectors, and by allowing them first to encourage the incendiary, then to denounce and hang him, and lastly to collect all the money they can, running up and down with

the whining ferocity of half-starved hyænas, under pretence of repairing the damages their exhausted country hath sustained. Others ask modestly a few thousands a year, and no more, from those whom they represent to us as naked and famished; and prove clearly to every dispassionate man who hath a single drop of free blood in his veins, that at least this pittance is due to them for abandoning their liberal and lucrative professions, and for endangering their valuable lives on the tempestuous seas, in order that the voice of Truth may sound for once upon the shores of England, and Humanity cast her shadow on the council-chamber.

I gave a dinner to a party of these fellows a few weeks ago. I know not how many kings and princes were among them, nor how many poets and prophets and legislators and sages. When they were half-drunk, they coaxed and threatened; when they had gone somewhat deeper, they joked, and croaked, and hiccupped, and wept over sweet Ireland; and when they could neither stand nor sit any longer, they fell upon their knees and their noddles, and swore that limbs, life, liberty, Ireland, and God himself, were all at the queen's service. It was only their holy religion, the religion of their forefathers . . . here sobs interrupted some, howls others, execrations more, and the liquor they had ingulfed the rest. I looked down on them with stupor and astonishment, seeing faces, forms, dresses, much like ours, and recollecting their ignorance, levity, and ferocity. My pages drew them gently by the heels down the steps; my grooms set them upright (inasmuch as might be) on their horses; and the people in the streets, shouting and pelting, sent forward the beasts to their straw.

Various plans have been laid before us for civilising or coercing them. Among the pacific, it was proposed to make an offer to five hundred of the richer Jews in the Hanse-towns and in Poland, who should be raised to the dignity of

the Irish peerage, and endowed with four thousand acres of good forfeited land, on condition of each paying two thousand pounds, and of keeping up ten horsemen and twenty foot, Germans or Poles, in readiness for service.

The Catholics bear nowhere such ill-will toward Jews as toward Protestants. Brooks make even worse neighbours than oceans do.

I myself saw no objection to the measure: but our gracious queen declared she had on insuperable one: *they stank!* We all acknowledged the strength of the argument, and took out our handkerchiefs. Lord Burleigh almost fainted; and Raleigh wondered how the Emperor Titus could bring up his men against Jerusalem.

‘Ah!’ said he looking reverentially at her majesty, ‘the star of Berenice shone above him! and what evil influence could that star not quell? what malignancy could it not annihilate?’

Hereupon he touched the earth with his brow until the queen said,

‘Sir Walter! lift me up those laurels.’

At which manifestation of princely good-will he was advancing to kiss her majesty’s hand, but she waved it, and said sharply,

‘Stand there, dog!’

Now what tale have you for us?

Spenser. Interrogate me, my lord, that I may answer each question distinctly, my mind being in sad confusion at what I have seen and undergone.

Essex. Give me thy account and opinion of these very affairs as thou leftest them; for I would rather know one part well, than all imperfectly; and the violences of which I have heard within the day surpass belief.

Why weepest thou, my gentle Spenser? Have the rebels sacked thy house?

Spenser. They have plundered and utterly destroyed it.

Essex. I grieve for thee, and will see thee righted.

Spenser. In this they have little harmed me.

Essex. How! I have heard it reported that thy grounds are fertile, and thy mansion large and pleasant.

Spenser. If river and lake and meadow-ground and mountain could render any place the abode of pleasantness, pleasant was mine, indeed!

On the lovely banks of Mulla I found deep contentment. Under the dark alders did I muse and meditate. Innocent hopes were my gravest cares, and my playfullest fancy was with kindly wishes. Ah! surely of all cruelties the worst is to extinguish our kindness. Mine is gone: I love the people and the land no longer. My lord, ask me not about them; I may speak injuriously.

Essex. Think rather then of thy happier hours and busier occupations; these likewise may instruct me.

← *Spenser.* The first seeds I sowed in the garden, ere the old castle was made habitable for my lovely bride, were acorns from Penshurst. I planted a little oak before my mansion at the birth of each child. My sons, I said to myself, shall often play in the shade of them when I am gone, and every year shall they take the measure of their growth, as fondly as I take theirs.

Essex. Well, well; but let not this thought make thee weep so bitterly.

Spenser. Poison may ooze from beautiful plants; deadly grief from dearest reminiscences.

I *must* grieve, I *must* weep: it seems the law of God, and the only one that men are not disposed to contravene. In the performance of this alone do they effectually aid one another.

Essex. Spenser! I wish I had at hand any arguments or persuasions, of force sufficient to remove thy sorrow: but really I am not in the habit of seeing men grieve at anything, except the loss of favour at court, or of a hawk, or of a buck-

hound. And were I to swear out my condolences to a man of thy discernment, in the same round roll-call phrases we employ with one another upon these occasions, I should be guilty, not of insincerity but of insolence. True grief hath ever something sacred in it; and when it visiteth a wise man and a brave one, is most holy.

Nay, kiss not my hand: he whom God smiteth hath God with him. In his presence what am I?

Spenser. Never so great, my lord, as at this hour, when you see aright who is greater. May he guide your counsels, and preserve your life and glory!

Essex. Where are thy friends? Are they with thee?

Spenser. Ah, where, indeed! Generous, true-hearted Philip! where art thou! whose presence was unto me peace and safety; whose smile was contentment, and whose praise renown. My lord! I cannot but think of him among still heavier losses: he was my earliest friend, and would have taught me wisdom.

Essex. Pastoral poetry, my dear Spenser, doth not require tears and lamentations. Dry thine eyes; rebuild thine house: the queen and council, I venture to promise thee, will make ample amends for every evil thou hast sustained. What! does that enforce thee to wail yet louder?

Spenser. Pardon me, bear with me, most noble heart! I have lost what no council, no queen, no Essex, can restore.

Essex. We will see that. There are other swords, and other arms to wield them, beside a Leicester's and a Raleigh's. Others can crush their enemies and serve their friends.

Spenser. O my sweet child! And of many so powerful, many so wise and so beneficent, was there none to save thee? None! none!

Essex. I now perceive that thou lamentest what almost every father is destined to lament. Happiness must be bought, although the payment may be delayed. Consider;

the same calamity might have befallen thee here in London. Neither the houses of ambassadors, nor the palaces of kings, nor the altars of God himself, are asylums against death. How do I know but under this very roof there may sleep some latent calamity, that in an instant shall cover with gloom every inmate of the house, and every far dependant?

Spenser. God avert it!

Essex. Every day every hour of the year, do hundreds mourn what thou mournest.

Spenser. Oh, no, no, no! Calamities there are around us; calamities there are all over the earth; calamities there are in all seasons; but none in any season, none in any place, like mine.

Essex. So say all fathers, so say all husbands. Look at any old mansion-house, and let the sun shine as gloriously as it may on the golden vanes, or the arms recently quartered over the gateway, or the embayed window, and on the happy pair that haply is toying at it; nevertheless, thou mayest say that of a certainty the same fabric hath seen much sorrow within its chambers, and heard many wailings: and each time this was the heaviest stroke of all. Funerals have passed along through the stout-hearted knights upon the wainscot, and amid the laughing nymphs upon the arras. Old servants have shaken their heads, as if somebody had deceived them, when they found that beauty and nobility could perish.

Edmund! the things that are too true pass by us as if they were not true at all; and when they have singled us out, then only do they strike us. Thou and I must go too. Perhaps the next year may blow us away with its fallen leaves.

Spenser. For you, my lord, many years (I trust) are waiting: I never shall see those fallen leaves. No leaf, no bud, will spring upon the earth before I sink into her breast for ever.

Essex. Thou, who art wiser than most men, shouldst bear

with patience, equanimity, and courage, what is common to all.

Spenser. Enough! enough! enough! Have all men seen their infant burned to ashes before their eyes?

Essex. Gracious God! Merciful Father! what is this?

Spenser. Burned alive! burned to ashes! burned to ashes! The flames dart their serpent tongues through the nursery-window. I cannot quit thee, my Elizabeth! I cannot lay down our Edmund. Oh these flames! they persecute, they enthrall me, they curl round my temples, they hiss upon my brain, they taunt me with their fierce foul voices, they carp at me, they wither me, they consume me, throwing back to me a little of life, to roll and suffer in, with their fangs upon me. Ask me, my lord, the things you wish to know from me; I may answer them; I am now composed again. Command me, my gracious lord! I would yet serve you; soon I shall be unable. You have stooped to raise me up; you have borne with me; you have pitied me, even like one not powerful; you have brought comfort, and will leave it with me; for gratitude is comfort.

Oh! my memory stands all a tip-toe on one burning point: when it drops from it, then it perishes. Spare me: ask me nothing; let me weep before you in peace; the kindest act of greatness.

Essex. I should rather have dared to mount into the midst of the conflagration than I now dare intreat thee not to weep. The tears that overflow thy heart, my Spenser, will staunch and heal it in their sacred stream, but not without hope in God.

Spenser. My hope in God is that I may soon see again what he has taken from me. Amid the myriads of angels there is not one so beautiful: and even he (if there be any) who is appointed my guardian, could never love me so. Ah! these are idle thoughts, vain wanderings, distempered dreams. If

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

there ever were guardian angels, he who so wanted one, my helpless boy, would not have left these arms upon my knees.

Essex. God help and sustain thee, too gentle Spenser! I never will desert thee. But what am I? Great they have called me! Alas, how powerless then and infantile is greatness in the presence of calamity!

Come, give me thy hand: let us walk up and down the gallery. Bravely done! I will envy no more a Sidney or a Raleigh.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS AND AGNES SOREL

Agnes. If a boy could ever be found so beautiful and so bashful, I should have taken you for a boy about fifteen years old. Really, and without flattery, I think you very lovely.

Jeanne. I hope I shall be greatly more so.

Agnes. Nay, nay: do not expect to improve, except a little in manner. Manner is the fruit, blushes are the blossom: these must fall off before the fruit sets.

Jeanne. By God's help, I may be soon more comely in the eyes of men.

Agnes. Ha! ha! even in piety there is a spice of vanity. The woman can only cease to be the woman when angels have disrobed her in Paradise.

Jeanne. I shall be far from loveliness, even in my own eyes, until I execute the will of God in the deliverance of his people.

Agnes. Never hope it.

Jeanne. The deliverance that is never hoped seldom comes. We conquer by hope and trust.

Agnes. Be content to have humbled the proud islanders. O how I rejoice that a mere child has done so.

Jeanne. A child ^{David} of my age, or younger, chastised the Philistines, and smote down the giant their leader. *Goliath*.

Agnes. But Talbot is a giant of another mould: his will is immovable, his power is irresistible, his word of command is *Conquer*.

Jeanne. It shall be heard no longer. The tempest of battle drowns it in English blood.

Agnes. Poor simpleton! The English will recover from the stupor of their fright, believing thee no longer to be a

sorceress. Did ever sword or spear intimidate them? Hast thou never heard of Creci? hast thou never heard of Agincourt? hast thou never heard of Poictiers? where the chivalry of France was utterly vanquished by sick and starving men, one against five. The French are the eagle's plume, the English are his talon.

Jeanne. The talon and the plume shall change places.

Agnes. Too confident!

Jeanne. O lady! is any one too confident in God?

Agnes. We may mistake his guidance. Already not only the whole host of the English, but many of our wisest and most authoritative churchmen, believe you on their consciences to act under the instigation of Satan.

Jeanne. What country or what creature has the Evil One ever saved? With what has he tempted me? with reproaches, with scorn, with weary days, with slumberless nights, with doubts, distrusts, and dangers, with absence from all who cherish me, with immodest soldierly language, and perhaps an untimely and a cruel death.

Agnes. But you are not afraid.

Jeanne. Healthy and strong, yet always too timorous, a few seasons ago I fled away from the lowings of a young steer, if he ran opposite; I awaited not the butting of a full-grown kid; the barking of a house-dog at our neighbour's gate turned me pale as ashes. And (shame upon me!) I scarcely dared kiss the child, when he called on me with burning tongue in the pestilence of a fever.

Agnes. No wonder! A creature in a fever! what a frightful thing!

Jeanne. It would be, were it not so piteous.

Agnes. And did you kiss it? Did you really kiss the lips?

Jeanne. I fancied mine would refresh them a little.

Agnes. And did they? I should have thought mine could do but trifling good in such cases.

Jeanne. Alas! when I believed I had quite cooled them, it was death had done it.

Agnes. Ah! this is courage.

Jeanne. The courage of the weaker sex, inherent in us all, but as deficient in me as in any, until an infant taught me my duty by its cries. Yet never have I quailed in the front of the fight, where I directed our ranks against the bravest. God pardon me if I err! but I believe his Spirit flamed within my breast, strengthened my arm, and led me on to victory.

Agnes. Say not so, or they will burn thee alive, poor child!

Why fallest thou before me? I have some power indeed, but in this extremity I could little help thee. The priest never releases the victim.

What! how! thy countenance is radiant with a heavenly joy: thy humility is like an angel's at the feet of God: I am unworthy to behold it.

Rise, Jeanne, rise!

Jeanne. Martyrdom too! The reward were too great for such an easy and glad obedience. France will become just and righteous: France will praise the Lord for her deliverance.

Agnes. Sweet enthusiast! I am confident, I am certain, of thy innocence.

Jeanne. O Lady Agnes!

Agnes. Why fixest thou thy eyes on me so piteously? Why sobbest thou? thou, to whom the representation of an imminent death to be apprehended for thee, left untroubled, joyous, exulting. Speak; tell me.

Jeanne. I must. This also is commanded me. You believe me innocent?

Agnes. In truth I do: why then look abashed? Alas! alas! could I mistake the reason? I spoke of innocence!

Leave me, leave me. Return another time. Follow thy vocation.

Jeanne. Agnes Sorell! be thou more than innocent, if innocence is denied thee. In the name of the Almighty, I call on thee to earn his mercy.

Agnes. I implore it incessantly, by day, by night.

Jeanne. Serve him as thou mayest best serve him; and thy tears, I promise thee, shall soon be less bitter than those which are dropping on this jewelled hand, and on the rude one which has dared to press it.

Agnes. What can I, what can I do?

Jeanne. Lead the king back to his kingdom.

Agnes. The king is in France.

Jeanne. No, no, no.

Agnes. Upon my word of honour.

Jeanne. And at such a time, O Heaven! in idleness and sloth!

Agnes. Indeed no. He is busy (this is the hour) in feeding and instructing two young hawks. Could you but see the little miscreants, how they dare to bite and claw and tug at him. He never hurts or scolds them for it; he is so good-natured: he even lets them draw blood; he is so very brave!

Running away from France! Who could have raised such a report? Indeed he is here. He never thought of leaving the country: and his affairs are becoming more and more prosperous ever since the battle. Can you not take my asseveration? Must I say it? he is now in this very house.

Jeanne. Then not in France. In France all love their country. Others of our kings, old men tell us, have been captives; but less ignominiously. Their enemies have respected their misfortunes and their honour.

Agnes. The English have always been merciful and generous.

Jeanne. And will you be less generous, less merciful?

Agnes. I?

Jeanne. You; the beloved of Charles.

Agnes. This is too confident. No, no: do not draw back: it is not too confident: it is only too reproachful. But your actions have given you authority. I have, nevertheless, a right to demand of you what creature on earth I have ever treated ignominiously or unkindly.

Jeanne. Your beloved; your king.

Agnes. Never. I owe to him all I have, all I am.

Jeanne. Too true! But let him in return owe to you, O Lady Agnes, eternal happiness, eternal glory. Condescend to labour with the humble handmaiden of the Lord, in fixing his throne and delivering his people.

Agnes. I cannot fight: I abominate war.

Jeanne. Not more than I do; but men love it.

Agnes. Too much.

Jeanne. Often too much, for often unjustly. But when God's right hand is visible in the vanguard, we who are called must follow.

Agnes. I dare not; indeed I dare not.

Jeanne. You dare not? you who dare withhold the king from his duty!

Agnes. We must never talk of their duties to our princes.

Jeanne. Then we omit to do much of our own. It is now mine: but above all it is yours.

Agnes. There are learned and religious men who might more properly.

Jeanne. Are these learned and religious men in the court? Pray tell me: since, if they are, seeing how poorly they have sped, I may peradventure, however unwillingly, however blameably, abate a little 'of my reverence for learning, and look for pure religion in lower places.

Agnes. They are modest; and they usually ask of me in what manner they may best please their master.

Jeanne. They believe then that your affection is proportional to the power you possess over him. I have heard com-

plaints that it is usually quite the contrary. But can such great men be loved? And do you love him? Why do you sigh so?

Agnes. Life is but sighs, and when they cease, 'tis over.

Jeanne. Now deign to answer me: do you truly love him?

Agnes. From my soul; and above it.

Jeanne. Then save him.

Lady! I am grieved at your sorrow, although it will hereafter be a source of joy unto you. The purest water runs from the hardest rock. Neither worth nor wisdom come without an effort; and patience and piety and salutary knowledge spring up and ripen from under the harrow of affliction. Before there is wine or there is oil, the grape must be trodden and the olive must be pressed.

I see you are framing in your heart the resolution.

Agnes. My heart can admit nothing but his image.

Jeanne. It must fall thence at last.

Agnes. Alas! alas! Time loosens man's affections. I may become unworthy. In the sweetest flower there is much that is not fragrance, and which transpires when the freshness has passed away.

Alas! if he should ever cease to love me!

Jeanne. Alas! if God should!

Agnes. Then indeed he might afflict me with so grievous a calamity.

Jeanne. And none worse after?

Agnes. What can there be?

O Heaven! mercy! mercy!

Jeanne. Resolve to earn it: one hour suffices.

Agnes. I am lost. Leave me, leave me.

Jeanne. Do we leave the lost? Are they beyond our care? Remember who died for them, and them only.

Agnes. You subdue me. Spare me: I would only collect my thoughts.

Jeanne. Cast them away. Fresh herbage springs from

under the withered. Be strong, and, if you love, be generous. Is it more glorious to make a captive than to redeem one?

Agnes. Is he in danger! O! . . you see all things . . is he? is he? is he?

Jeanne. From none but you.

Agnes. God, it is evident, has given to thee alone the power of rescuing both him and France. He has bestowed on thee the mightiness of virtue.

Jeanne. Believe, and prove thy belief, that he has left no little of it still in thee.

Agnes. When we have lost our chastity, we have lost all, in his sight and in man's. But man is unforgiving, God is merciful.

Jeanne. I am so ignorant, I know only a part of my duties: yet those which my Maker has taught me I am earnest to perform. He teaches me that divine love has less influence over the heart than human: he teaches me that it ought to have more: finally, he commands me to announce to thee, not his anger, but his will.

Agnes. Declare it; O declare it. I do believe his holy word is deposited in thy bosom.

Jeanne. Encourage the king to lead his vassals to the field.

Agnes. When the season is milder.

Jeanne. And bid him leave you for ever.

Agnes. Leave me! one whole campaign! one entire summer! Oh anguish! It sounded in my ears as if you said 'for ever'.

Jeanne. I say it again.

Agnes. Thy power is superhuman, mine is not.

Jeanne. It ought to be, in setting God at defiance. The mightiest of the angels rued it.

Agnes. We did not make our hearts.

Jeanne. But we can mend them.

Agnes. Oh! mine (God knows it) bleeds.

Jeanne. Say rather it expels from it the last stagnant drop of its rebellious sin. Salutary pangs may be painfuller than mortal ones.

Agnes. Bid him leave me! wish it! permit it! I think it near! believe it ever can be! Go, go . . . I am lost eternally.

Jeanne. And Charles too.

Agnes. Hush! hush! What has he done that other men have not done also?

Jeanne. He has left undone what others do. Other men fight for their country.

I always thought it was pleasant to the young and beautiful to see those they love victorious and applauded. Twice in my lifetime I have been present at wakes, where prizes were contended for: what prizes I quite forget: certainly not kingdoms. The winner was made happy: but there was one made happier. Village maids love truly: ay, they love glory too; and not their own. The tenderest heart loves best the courageous one: the gentle voice says, 'Why wert thou so hazardous?' the deeper-toned replies, 'For thee, for thee.'

Agnes. But if the saints of heaven are offended, as I fear they may be, it would be presumptuous in the king to expose his person in battle, until we have supplicated and appeased them.

Jeanne. One hour of self-denial, one hour of stern exertion against the assaults of passion, outvalues a life of prayer

Agnes. Prayer, if many others will pray with us, can do all things. I will venture to raise up that arm which has only one place for its repose: I will steal away from that undivided pillow, fragrant with fresh and unextinguishable love.

Jeanne. Sad earthly thoughts!

Agnes. You make them sad, you cannot make them earthly. There is a divinity in a love descending from on high, in theirs who can see into the heart and mould it to their will.

Jeanne. Has man that power?

Agnes. Happy, happy girl! to ask it, and unfeignedly.

Jeanne. Be happy too.

Agnes. How? how?

Jeanne. By passing resolutely through unhappiness. It must be done.

Agnes. I will throw myself on the pavement, and pray until no star is in the heavens. Oh! I will so pray, so weep.

Jeanne. Unless you save the tears of others, in vain you shed your own.

Agnes. Again I ask you, what *can* I do?

Jeanne. When God has told you what you ought to do, he has already told you what you can.

Agnes. I will think about it seriously.

Jeanne. Serious thoughts are folded up, chested, and unlooked-at: lighter, like dust, settle all about the chamber. The promise to think seriously dismisses and closes the door on the thought. Adieu! God pity and pardon you. Through you the wrath of Heaven will fall upon the kingdom.

Agnes. Denouncer of just vengeance, recall the sentence! I tremble before that countenance severely radiant: I sink amid that calm, more appalling than the tempest. Look not into my heart with those gentle eyes! O how they penetrate! They ought to see no sin: sadly must it pain them.

Jeanne. Think not of me: pursue thy destination: save France

Agnes (after a long pause). Glorious privilege! divine appointment! Is it thus, O my Redeemer! my crimes are visited?

Come with me, blessed Jeanne! come instantly with me to the king: come to him whom thy virtue and valour have rescued.

Jeanne. Not now: nor ever with thee. Again I shall behold him; a conqueror at Orleans, a king at Rheims. Regenerate Agnes! be this thy glory, if there be any that is not God's.

BOSSUET AND THE DUCHESS DE FONTANGES

Bossuet. Mademoiselle, it is the king's desire that I compliment you on the elevation you have attained.

Fontanges. O monseigneur, I know very well what you mean. His Majesty is kind and polite to everybody. The last thing he said to me was, 'Angélique! do not forget to compliment Monseigneur the bishop on the dignity I have conferred upon him, of almoner to the Dauphiness. I desired the appointment for him, only that he might be of rank sufficient to confess you, now you are duchess. Let him be your confessor, my little girl. He has fine manners.'

Bossuet. I dare not presume to ask you, mademoiselle, what was your gracious reply to the condescension of our royal master.

Fontanges. O yes, you may. I told him I was almost sure I should be ashamed of confessing such naughty things to a person of high rank, who writes like an angel.

Bossuet. The observation was inspired, mademoiselle, by your goodness and modesty.

Fontanges. You are so agreeable a man, monseigneur, I will confess to you directly, if you like.

Bossuet. Have you brought yourself to a proper frame of mind, young lady?

Fontanges. What is that?

Bossuet. Do you hate sin?

Fontanges. Very much.

Bossuet. Are you resolved to leave it off?

Fontanges. I have left it off entirely since the king began

to love me. I have never said a spiteful word of anybody since.

Bossuet. In your opinion, mademoiselle, are there no other sins than malice?

Fontanges. I never stole anything: I never committed adultery: I never coveted my neighbour's wife: I never killed any person: though several have told me they should die for me.

Bossuet. Vain, idle talk! did you listen to it?

Fontanges. Indeed I did, with both ears; it seemed so funny.

Bossuet. You have something to answer for then.

Fontanges. No, indeed I have not, monseigneur. I have asked many times after them, and found they were all alive: which mortified me.

Bossuet. So then! you would really have them die for you?

Fontanges. O no, no . . . but I wanted to see whether ~~they~~ they were in earnest or told me fibs: for if they told me fibs I would never trust them again. I do not care about them; for the king told me I was only to mind *him*.

Bossuet. Lowest and highest, we all owe to his Majesty our duty and submission.

Fontanges. I am sure he has mine: so you need not blame me or question me on that. At first, indeed, when he entered the folding-doors, I was in such a flurry I could hear my heart beat across the chamber: by degrees I cared little about the matter: and at last, when I grew used to it, I liked it rather than not. Now, if this is not confession, what is?

Bossuet. We must abstract the soul from every low mundane thought. Do you hate the world, mademoiselle?

Fontanges. A good deal of it: All Picardy for example, and all Sologne: nothing is uglier . . . and, oh my life! what frightful men and women!

Bossuet. I would say, in plain language, do you hate the flesh and the devil?

Fontanges. Who does not hate the devil? If you will hold my hand the while, I will tell him so . . . I hate you, beast! There now. As for flesh, I never could bear a fat man. Such people can neither dance nor hunt, nor do anything that I know of.

Bossuet. Mademoiselle Marie-Angélique de Scoraille de Rousille, Duchesse de Fontanges! do you hate titles and dignities and yourself?

Fontanges. Myself! does anyone hate me? Why should I be the first? Hatred is the worst thing in the world it makes one so very ugly.

Bossuet. To love God, we must hate ourselves We must detest our bodies if we would save our souls.

Fontanges. That is hard: how can I do it? I see nothing so detestable in mine: do you? To love is easier I love God whenever I think of him, he has been so very good to me: but I cannot hate myself, if I would. As God hath not hated me, why should I? Beside, it was he who made the king to love me; for I heard you say in a sermon that the hearts of kings are in his rule and governance. As for titles and dignities, I do not care much about them while his Majesty loves me, and calls me his Angélique They make people more civil about us; and therefore it must be a simpleton who hates or disregards them, and a hypocrite who pretends it. I am glad to be a duchess. Manon and Lisette have never tied my garter so as to hurt me since, nor has the mischievous old La Grange said anything cross or bold: on the contrary, she told me what a fine colour and what a plumpness it gave me. Would not you be rather a duchess than a waiting-maid or a nun, if the king gave you your choice?

Bossuet. Pardon me, mademoiselle, I am confounded at the levity of your question.

Fontanges. I am in earnest, as you see.

Bossuet. Flattery will come before you in other and more dangerous forms: you will be commended for excellences which do not belong to you: and this you will find as injurious to your repose as to your virtue. An ingenuous mind feels in unmerited praise the bitterest reproof. If you reject it you are unhappy, if you accept it you are undone. The compliments of a king are of themselves sufficient to pervert your intellect.

Fontanges. There you are mistaken twice over. It is not my person that pleases him so greatly; it is my spirit, my wit, my talents, my genius, and that very thing which you have mentioned . . . what was it? my intellect. He never complimented me the least upon my beauty. Others have said that I am the most beautiful young creature under heaven; a blossom of Paradise, a nymph, an angel; worth (let me whisper it in your ear . . . do I lean too hard?) a thousand Montespons. But his Majesty never said more on the occasion than that I was *imparagonable!* (what is that?) and that he adored me; holding my hand and sitting quite still, when he might have romped with me and kissed me.

Bossuet. I would aspire to the glory of converting you.

Fontanges. You may do anything with me but convert me: you must not do that: I am a Catholic born. M. de Turenne and Mademoiselle de Duras were heretics: you did right there. The king told the chancellor that he prepared them, that the business was arranged for you, and that you had nothing to do but to get ready the arguments and responses, which you did gallantly, did not you? And yet Mademoiselle de Duras was very awkward for a long while afterward in crossing herself, and was once remarked to beat her breast in the litany with the points of two fingers at a time, when every one is taught to use only the second, whether it has a ring upon it or not. I am sorry she did so; for people might

think her insincere in her conversion, and pretend that she kept a finger for each religion.

Bossuet. It would be as uncharitable to doubt the conviction of Mademoiselle de Duras as that of M. le Maréchal.

Fontanges. I have heard some fine verses, I can assure you, monseigneur, in which you are called the conqueror of Turenne. I should like to have been his conqueror myself, he was so great a man. I understand that you have lately done a much more difficult thing.

Bossuet. To what do you refer, mademoiselle?

Fontanges. That you have overcome quietism. Now, in the name of wonder, how could you manage that?

Bossuet. By the grace of God.

Fontanges. Yes indeed; but never until now did God give any preacher so much of his grace as to subdue this pest.

Bossuet. It has appeared among us but lately.

Fontanges. O dear me! I have always been subject to it dreadfully, from a child.

Bossuet. Really! I never heard so.

Fontanges. I checked myself as well as I could, although they constantly told me I looked well in it.

Bossuet. In what, mademosielle?

Fontanges. In quietism; that is when I fell asleep at sermon-time. I am ashamed that such a learned and pious man as M. de Fénelon should incline to it, as they say he does.

Bossuet. Mademoiselle, you quite mistake the matter.

Fontanges. Is not then M. de Fénelon thought a very pious and learned person?

Bossuet. And justly.

Fontanges. I have read a great way in a romance he has begun, about a ^{telemaquis - son of rhydas} knight-errant in search of a father. The king says there are many such about his court; but I never saw them, nor heard of them before! The Marchioness de la

Motte, his relative, brought it to me, written out in a charming hand, as much as the copy-book would hold, and I got through I know not how far. If he had gone on with the nymphs in the grotto I never should have been tired of him; but he quite forgot his own story, and left them at once; in a hurry (I suppose) to set out upon his mission to Saintonge in the *pays d'Aunis*, where the king has promised him a famous *heretic-hunt*. He is, I do assure you, a wonderful creature; he understands so much Latin and Greek, and knows all the tricks of the sorceresses. Yet you keep him under.

Bossuet. Mademoiselle, if you really have anything to confess, and if you desire that I should have the honour of absolving you, it would be better to proceed in it, than to oppress me with unmerited eulogies on my humble labours.

Fontanges. You must first direct me, monseigneur: I have nothing particular. The king assures me there is no harm whatever in his love toward me.

Bossuet. That depends on your thoughts at the moment. If you abstract the mind from the body, and turn your heart toward heaven . . .

Fontanges. O monseigneur, I always did so . . . every time but once . . . you quite make me blush. Let us converse about something else, or I shall grow too serious, just as you made me the other day at the funeral sermon. And now let me tell you, my lord, you compose such pretty funeral sermons, I hope I shall have the pleasure of hearing you preach mine.

Bossuet. Rather let us hope, mademoiselle, that the hour is yet far distant when so melancholy a service will be performed for you. May he who is unborn be the sad announcer of your departure hence! May he indicate to those around him many virtues not perhaps yet full-blown in you, and point triumphantly to many faults and foibles checked by

you in their early growth, and lying dead on the open road you shall have left behind you! To me the painful duty will, I trust, be spared: I am advanced in age: you are a child.

Fontanges. O no, I am seventeen.

Bossuet. I should have supposed you younger by two years at least. But do you collect nothing from your own reflection, which raises so many in my breast? You think it possible that I, aged as I am, may preach a sermon on your funeral. Alas, it is so! such things have been! There is, however, no funeral so sad to follow as the funeral of our own youth, which we have been pampering with fond desires, ambitious hopes, and all the bright berries that hang in poisonous clusters over the path of life.

Fontanges. I never minded them; I like peaches better; and one a day is quite enough for me.

Bossuet. We say that our days are few: and, saying it, we say too much. Marie-Angélique, we have but one: the past are not ours, and who can promise us the future? This in which we live is ours only while we live in it; the next moment may strike it off from us; the next sentence I would utter may be broken and fall between us. The beauty that has made a thousand hearts to beat at one instant, at the succeeding has been without pulse and colour, without admirer, friend, companion, follower. She by whose eyes the march of victory shall have been directed, whose name shall have animated armies at the extremities of the earth, drops into one of its crevices and mingles with its dust. Duchess de Fontanges! think on this! Lady! so live as to think on it undisturbed!

Fontanges. O God! I am quite alarmed. Do not talk thus gravely. It is in vain that you speak to me in so sweet a voice. I am frightened even at the rattle of the beads about my neck: take them off, and let us talk on other things. What was it that dropped on the floor as you were speaking?

It seemed to shake the room, though it sounded like a pin or button.

Bossuet. Never mind it: leave it there: I pray you, I implore you, madame!

Fontanges. Why do you rise? why do you run? why not let me? I am nimbler. So, your ring fell from your hand, my lord bishop! How quick you are! Could not you have trusted me to pick it up?

Bossuet. Madame is too condescending: had this happened, I should have been overwhelmed with confusion. My hand is shrivelled; the ring has ceased to fit it. A mere accident may draw us into perdition: a mere accident may bestow on us the means of grace. A pebble has moved you more than my words.

Fontanges. It pleases me vastly: I admire rubies: I will ask the king for one exactly like it. This is the time he usually comes from the chase. I am sorry you cannot be present to hear how prettily I shall ask him: but that is impossible, you know: for I shall do it just when I am certain he would give anything. He said so himself: he said but yesterday.

Such a sweet creature is worth a world . . .

and no actor on the stage was ever more like a king than his Majesty was when he spoke it, if he had but kept his wig and robe on. And yet you know he is rather stiff and wrinkled for so great a monarch: and his eyes, I am afraid, are beginning to fail him; he looks so close at things.

Bossuet. Mademoiselle, such is the duty of a prince who desires to conciliate our regard and love.

Fontanges. Well, I think so too; though I did not like it in him at first. I am sure he will order the ring for me, and I will confess to you with it upon my finger. But first I must be cautious and particular to know of him how much it is his royal will that I should say.

LUCULLUS AND CAESAR

Caesar. Lucius Lucullus, I come to you privately and unattended for reasons which you will know; confiding, I dare not say in your friendship, since no service of mine toward you has deserved it, but in your generous and disinterested love of peace. Hear me on. Cneius Pompeius, according to the report of my connexions in the city, had, on the instant of my leaving it for the province, begun to solicit his dependants to strip me ignominiously of authority. Neither vows nor affinities can bind him. He would degrade the father of his wife; he would humiliate his own children, the unoffending, the unborn; he would poison his own ardent love, at the suggestion of Ambition. Matters are now brought so far, that either he or I must submit to a reverse of fortune; since no concession can assuage his malice, divert his envy, or gratify his cupidity. No sooner could I raise myself up, from the consternation and stupefaction into which the certainty of these reports had thrown me, than I began to consider in what manner my own private affections might become the least noxious to the republic. Into whose arms then could I throw myself more naturally and more securely, to whose bosom could I commit and consign more sacredly the hopes and destinies of our beloved country, than his who laid down power in the midst of its enjoyments, in the vigour of youth, in the pride of triumph: when Dignity solicited, when Friendship urged, entreated, supplicated, and when Liberty herself invited and beckoned to him, from the senatorial order and from the curule chair? Betrayed and abandoned by those we had confided in, our next friendship,

if ever our hearts receive any, or if any will venture in those places of desolation, flies forward instinctively to what is most contrary and dissimilar. Caesar is hence the visitant of Lucullus.

Lucullus. I had always thought Pompeius more moderate and more reserved than you represent him, Caius Julius! and yet I am considered in general, and surely you also will consider me, but little liable to be prepossessed by him.

Caesar. Unless he may have ingratiated himself with you recently, by the administration of that worthy whom last winter his partisans dragged before the senate, and forced to assert publicly that you and Cato had instigated a party to circumvent and murder him; and whose carcass, a few days afterward, when it had been announced that he had died by a natural death, was found covered with bruises, stabs, and dislocations.

Lucullus. You bring much to my memory which had quite slipped out of it, and I wonder that it could make such an impression on yours. A proof to me that the interest you take in my behalf began earlier than your delicacy will permit you to acknowledge. You are fatigued, which I ought to have perceived before.

Caesar. Not at all: the fresh air has given me life and alertness: I feel it upon my cheek even in the room.

Lucullus. After our dinner and sleep, we will spend the remainder of the day on the subject of your visit.

Caesar. Those Ethiopian slaves of yours shiver with cold upon the mountain here; and truly I myself was not insensible to the change of climate, in the way from Mutina.

What white bread! I never found such even at Naples or Capua. This Formian wine (which I prefer to the Chian) how exquisite!

Lucullus. Such is the urbanity of Caesar, even while he

bites his lip with displeasure. How! surely it bleeds! Permit me to examine the cup.

Caesar. I believe a jewel has fallen out of the rim in the carriage: the gold is rough there.

Lucullus. Marcipor! let me never see that cup again. No answer, I desire. My guest pardons heavier faults. Mind that dinner be prepared for us shortly.

Caesar. In the meantime, Lucullus, if your health permits it, shall we walk a few paces round the villa? for I have not seen anything of the kind before.

Lucullus. The walls are double: the space between them two feet: the materials for the most part earth and stubble. Two hundred slaves, and about as many mules and oxen, brought the beams and rafters up the mountain: my architects fixed them at once in their place: every part was ready, even the wooden nails. The roof is thatched, you see.

Caesar. Is there no danger that so light a material should be carried off by the winds, on such an eminence?

Lucullus. None resists them equally well.

Caesar. On this immensely high mountain I should be apprehensive of the lightning, which the poets, and I think the philosophers too, have told us, strikes the highest.

Lucullus. The poets are right; for whatever is received as truth, is truth in poetry; and a fable may illustrate like a fact. But the philosophers are wrong; as they generally are, even in the commonest things; because they seldom look beyond their own tenets, unless through captiousness; and because they argue more than they meditate, and display more than they examine. Archimedes and Euclid are, in my opinion, the worthiest of the name; they alone having kept apart to the demonstrable, the practical, and the useful. Many of the rest are good writers and good disputants; but unfaithful suitors of simple Science; boasters of their acquaintance with gods and goddesses, plagiaries and impostors. I had forgotten

my roof, although it is composed of much the same materials as the philosophers'. Let the lightning fall: one handful of silver, or less, repairs the damage.

Caesar. Impossible! nor indeed one thousand; nor twenty, if those tapestries and pictures are consumed.

Lucullus. True; but only the thatch would burn. For before the baths were tessellated, I filled the area with alum and water, and soaked the timbers and laths for many months, and covered them afterward with alum in powder, by means of liquid glue. Mithridates taught me this. Having in vain attacked with combustibles a wooden tower, I took it by stratagem, and found within it a mass of alum, which, if a great hurry had not been observed by us among the enemy in the attempt to conceal it, would have escaped our notice. I never scrupled to extort the truth from my prisoners: but my instruments were purple robes and plate, and the only wheel in my armoury, destined to such purposes, was the wheel of Fortune.

Caesar. I wish, in my campaigns, I could have equalled your clemency and humanity: but the Gauls are more uncertain, fierce, and perfidious, than the wildest tribes of Caucasus; and our policy cannot be carried with us: it must be formed upon the spot. They love you, not for abstaining from hurting them, but for ceasing; and they embrace you only at two seasons; when stripes are fresh or when stripes are imminent. Elsewhere I hope to become the rival of Lucullus in this admirable part of virtue.

I shall never build villas, because . . . but what are your proportions? Surely the edifice is extremely low.

Lucullus. There is only one floor: the height of the apartments is twenty feet to the cornice, five above it; the breadth is twenty-five; the length forty. The building, as you perceive, is quadrangular: three sides contain four rooms each: the other has many partitions and two stories, for domestics and offices. Here is my salt-bath.

Caesar. A bath indeed for all the Nereids named by Hesiod, with room enough for the Tritons and their herds and horses.

Lucullus. Next to it, where yonder boys are carrying the myrrhine vases, is a tepid one of fresh water, ready for your reception.

Caesar. I resign the higher pleasure for the inferior, as we all are apt to do ; and I will return to the enjoyment of your conversation when I have indulged a quarter of an hour in this refreshment.

Lucullus. Meanwhile I will take refuge with some less elegant philosopher, whose society I shall quit again with less regret. (*Caesar returning.*) It is useless, O Caius Julius, to inquire if there has been any negligence or any omission in the service of the bath: for these are secrets which you never impart to the most favoured of your friends.

Caesar. I have often enjoyed the luxury much longer, but never more highly. Pardon my impatience to see the remainder of your Apennine villa.

Lucullus. Here stand my two cows. Their milk is brought to me with its warmth and froth; for it loses its salubrity both by repose and by motion. Pardon me, Caesar: I shall appear to you to have forgotten that I am not conducting Marcus Varro.

Caesar. You would convert him into Cacus: he would drive them off. What beautiful beasts! how sleek and white and cleanly! I never saw any like them, excepting when we sacrifice to Jupiter the stately leader from the pastures of the Clitumnus.

Lucullus. Often do I make a visit to these quiet creatures, and with no less pleasure than in former days to my horses. Nor indeed can I much wonder that whole nations have been consentaneous in treating them as objects of devotion: the only thing wonderful is, that gratitude seems to have

acted as powerfully and extensively as fear; indeed more extensively; for no object of worship whatever has attracted so many worshippers. Where Jupiter has one, the cow has ten: she was venerated before he was born, and will be when even the carvers have forgotten him.

Caesar. Unwillingly should I see it; for the character of our gods has formed the character of our nation. Serapis and Isis have stolen in among them within our memory, and others will follow, until at last Saturn will not be the only one emasculated by his successor. What can be more august than our rites? The first dignitaries of the republic are emulous to administer them: nothing of low or venal has any place in them, nothing pusillanimous, nothing unsocial and austere. I speak of them as they were; before Superstition woke up again from her slumber, and caught to her bosom with maternal love the alluvial monsters of the Nile. Philosophy, never fit for the people, had entered the best houses, and the image of Epicurus had taken the place of the Lemures. But men cannot bear to be deprived long together of anything they are used to; not even of their fears; and, by a reaction of the mind appertaining to our nature, new stimulants were looked for, not on the side of pleasure, where nothing new could be expected or imagined, but on the opposite. Irreligion is followed by fanaticism, and fanaticism by irreligion, alternately and perpetually.

Lucullus. The religion of our country, as you observe, is well adapted to its inhabitants. Our progenitor Mars hath Venus recumbent on his breast, and looking up to him, teaching us that pleasure is to be sought in the bosom of valour and by the means of war. No great alteration, I think, will ever be made in our rites and ceremonies; the best and most imposing that could be collected from all nations, and uniting them to us by our complaisance in adopting them. The gods themselves may change names, to flatter new power:

and indeed, as we degenerate, Religion will accommodate herself to our propensities and desires. Our heaven is now popular: it will become monarchical: not without a crowded court, as befits it, of apparitors, and satellites and minions of both sexes, paid and caressed for carrying to their stern dark-bearded master prayers and supplications. Altars must be strewn with broken minds, and incense rise amid abject aspirations. Gods will be found unfit for their places; and it is not impossible that, in the ruin imminent from our contentions for power, and in the necessary extinction both of ancient families and of generous sentiments, our consular fasces may become the water-sprinklers of some upstart priesthood, and that my son may apply for lustration to the son of my groom. The interest of such men requires that the spirit of arms and of arts be extinguished. They will predicate peace, that the people may be tractable to them: but a religion altogether pacific is the fomentor of wars and the nurse of crimes, alluring Sloth from within and Violence from afar. If ever it should prevail among the Romans, it must prevail alone: for notions more vigorous and energetic will invade them, close upon them, trample them under foot; and the name of Roman, which is now the most glorious, will become the most opprobrious upon earth.

Caesar. The time I hope may be distant; for next to my own name I hold my country's.

Lucullus. Mine, not coming from Troy or Ida, is lower in my estimation: I place my country's first.

You are surveying the little lake beside us. It contains no fish: birds never alight on it: the water is extremely pure and cold: the walk round is pleasant; not only because there is always a gentle breeze from it, but because the turf is fine, and the surface of the mountain on this summit is perfectly on a level, to a great extent in length; not a trifling advantage to me, who walk often, and am weak. I have no alley, no

garden, no inclosure: the park is in the vale below, where a brook supplies the ponds, and where my servants are lodged; for here I have only twelve in attendance.

Caesar. What is that so white, toward the Adriatic?

Lucullus. The Adriatic itself. Turn round, and you may descry the Tuscan Sea. Our situation is reported to be among the highest of the Apennines . . . Marcipor has made the sign to me that dinner is ready. Pass this way.

Caesar. What a library is here! Ah Marcus Tullius! I salute thy image. Why frownest thou upon me? collecting the consular robe and uplifting the right arm, as when Rome stood firm again, and Catiline fled before thee.

Lucullus. Just so; such was the action the statuary chose, as adding a new endearment to the memory of my absent friend.

Caesar. Sylla, who honoured you above all men, is not here.

Lucullus. I have his *Commentaries*: he inscribed them, as you know, to me. Something even of our benefactors may be forgotten, and gratitude be unreprieved.

Caesar. The impression on that couch, and the two fresh honeysuckles in the leaves of those two books, would show, even to a stranger, that this room is peculiarly the master's. Are they sacred?

Lucullus. To me and Caesar.

Caesar. I would have asked permission.

Lucullus. Caius Julius, you have nothing to ask of Polybius and Thucydides; nor of Xenophon, the next to them on the table.

Caesar. Thucydides! the most generous, the most unprejudiced, the most sagacious, of historians. Now, Lucullus, you whose judgement in style is more accurate than any other Roman's, do tell me whether a commander, desirous of writing his *Commentaries*, could take to himself a more perfect model than Thucydides.

Lucullus. Nothing is more perfect, nor ever will be: the scholar of Pericles, the master of Demosthenes! the equal of the one in military science, and of the other not the inferior in civil and forensic; the calm dispassionate judge of the general by whom he was defeated; his defender, his encomiast. To talk of such men is conducive not only to virtue but to health.

Caesar. We have no writer who could keep up long together his severity and strength. I would follow him; but I shall be contented with my genius, if (Thucydides in sight) I come many paces behind, and attain by study and attention the graceful and secure mediocrity of Xenophon.

Lucullus. You will avoid, I think, Caesar, one of his peculiarities; his tendency to superstition.

Caesar. I dare promise this; and even to write nothing so flat and idle as his introduction to the *Cyropaedia*. The first sentence that follows it, I perceive, repeats the same word, with its substantive, four times. This is a trifle: but great writers and great painters do miracles or mischief by a single touch. Our authors are so addicted of late to imitate the Grecian, that a bad introduction is more classical than a good one. Not to mention any friend of yours, Crispus Sallustius, who is mine, brought me one recently of this description; together with some detached pieces of a history, which nothing in our prose or poetry hath surpassed in animation.

Lucullus. We ought to talk of these things by ourselves; not before the vulgar; by which expression I mean the unlearned and irreverent, in forum and in senate. Our Cicero has indeed avoided such inelegance as that of Xenophon: one perhaps less pardonable may be found repeatedly in his works: I would say an inelegance not arising from neglect, or obtusity of ear, but coming forth in the absence of reflection. He often says '*mirari soleo.*' Now surely a

wise man soon ceases to wonder at anything, and instead of indulging in the habitude of wonder at one object, brings it closer to him, makes it familiar, discusses, and dismisses it. He told me in his last letter of an incredible love and affection for me. Pardon me, Caesar! pardon me, Genius of Rome! and Mercury! I exclaimed, '*The clown!*' laughing heartily. He would not that I should really have thought his regard *incredible*; on the contrary, that I should believe it and confide in it to its full extent, and that I should flatter myself it was not only possible but reasonable. In vain will any one remark to me, '*Such phrases are common.*' In our ordinary language there are many beauties, more or less visible according to their place and season, which a judicious writer and forcible orator will subject to his arbitration and service: there are also many things which, if used at all, must be used cautiously. I may be much at my ease without being in tatters, and without treading on the feet of those I come forward to salute. I arrogate to myself no superiority, in detecting a peculiar and latent mark upon that exalted luminary: his own effulgence showed me it. From Cicero down to me the distance is as great, as between the prince of the senate and the lowest voter. I influenced the friends of order; he fulminated and exterminated the enemies. I have served my country; he hath saved it.

This other is my dining-room. You expect the dishes.

Caesar. I misunderstood . . I fancied . .

Lucullus. Repose yourself, and touch with the ebony wand, beside you, the sphynx on either of those obelisks, right or left.

Caesar. Let me me look at them first.

Lucullus. The contrivance was intended for one person, or two at most, desirous of privacy and quiet. The blocks of jasper in my pair, and of porphyry in yours, easily yield in their grooves, each forming one partition. There are four,

containing four platforms. The lower holds four dishes, such as sucking forest-boars, venison, hares, tunnies, sturgeons, which you will find within; the upper three, eight each, but diminutive. The confectionery is brought separately; for the steam would spoil it, if any should escape. The melons are in the snow thirty feet under us: they came early this morning from a place in the vicinity of Luni, so that I hope they may be crisp, independently of their coolness.

Caesar. I wonder not at anything of refined elegance in Lucullus: but really here Antiochia and Alexandria seem to have cooked for us, and magicians to be our attendants.

Lucullus. The absence of slaves from our repast is the luxury: for Marcipor alone enters, and he only when I press a spring with my foot or wand. When you desire his appearance, touch that chalcedony, just before you.

Caesar. I eat quick, and rather plentifully: yet the valetudinarian (excuse my rusticity, for I rejoice at seeing it) appears to equal the traveller in appetite, and to be contented with one dish.

Lucullus. It is milk: such, with strawberries, which ripen on the Apennines many months in continuance, and some other berries of sharp and grateful flavour, has been my only diet since my first residence here. The state of my health requires it; and the habitude of nearly three months renders this food not only more commodious to my studies and more conducive to my sleep, but also more agreeable to my palate, than any other.

Caesar. Returning to Rome or Baiae, you must domesticate and tame them. The cherries you introduced from Pontus are now growing in Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, and the largest and best in the world perhaps are upon the more sterile side of Lake Larius.

Lucullus. There are some fruits, and some virtues, which require a harsh soil and bleak exposure for their perfection.

Caesar. In such a profusion of viand, and so savoury, I perceive no odour.

Lucullus. A flue conducts heat through the compartments of the obelisks; and if you look up, you may observe that those gilt roses, between the astragals in the cornice, are prominent from it half a span. Here is an aperture in the wall, between which and the outer is perpetual current of air. We are now in the dog-days; and I have never felt in the whole summer more heat than at Rome in many days of March.

Caesar. Usually you are attended by troops of domestics and of dinner-friends, not to mention the learned and scientific, nor your own family, your attachment to which, from youth upward, is one of the higher graces in your character. Your brother was seldom absent from you.

Lucullus. Marcus was coming: but the vehement heats along the Arno, in which valley he has a property he never saw before, inflamed his blood; and he now is resting for a few days at Faesulae, a little town destroyed by Sylla within our memory, who left it only air and water, the best in Tuscany. The health of Marcus, like mine, has been declining for several months: we are running our last race against each other: and never was I, in youth along the Tiber, so anxious of first reaching the goal. I would not outlive him: I should reflect too painfully on earlier days, and look forward too despondently on future. As for friends, lampreys and turbots beget them, and they spawn not amid the solitude of the Apennines. To dine in company with more than two, is a Gaulish and German thing I can hardly bring myself to believe that I have eaten in concert with twenty; so barbarous and herdlike a practice does it now appear to me; such an incentive to drink much and talk loosely; not to add, such a necessity to speak loud; which is clownish and odious in the extreme. On this mountain summit I hear no noises,

no voices, not even of salutation: we have no flies about us and scarcely an insect or reptile.

Caesar. Your amiable son is probably with his uncle: is he well?

Lucullus. Perfectly: he was indeed with my brother in his intended visit to me; but Marcus, unable to accompany him hither, or superintend his studies in the present state of his health, sent him directly to his uncle Cato at Tusculum, a man fitter than either of us to direct his education, and preferable to any, excepting yourself and Marcus Tullius, in eloquence and urbanity.

Caesar. Cato is so great, that whoever is greater must be the happiest and first of men.

Lucullus. That any such be still existing, O Julius, ought to excite no groan from the breast of a Roman citizen. But perhaps I wrong you; perhaps your mind was forced reluctantly back again, on your past animosities and contests in the senate.

Caesar. I revere him, but cannot love him.

Lucullus. Then, Caius Julius, you groaned with reason; and I would pity rather than reprove you.

On the ceiling, at which you are looking, there is no gilding, and little painting . . . a mere trellis of vines bearing grapes, and the heads, shoulders, and arms, rising from the cornice only, of boys and girls climbing up to steal them, and scrambling for them: nothing overhead: no giants tumbling down, no Jupiter thundering, no Mars and Venus caught at midday, no river-gods pouring out their urns upon us: for, as I think nothing so insipid as a flat ceiling, I think nothing so absurd as a storied one. Before I was aware, and without my participation, the painter had adorned that of my bedchamber with a golden shower, bursting from varied and irradiated clouds. On my expostulation, his excuse was, that he knew the Danaë of Scopas, in a recumbent

posture, was to occupy the centre of the room. The walls, behind the tapestry and pictures, are quite rough. In forty-three days the whole fabric was put together and habitable.

The wine has probably lost its freshness: will you try some other?

Caesar. Its temperature is exact; its flavour exquisite. Latterly I have never sat long after dinner, and am curious to pass through the other apartments, if you will trust me.

Lucullus. I attend you.

Caesar. Lucullus! who is here? what figure is that on the poop of the vessel? can it be . . .

Lucullus. The subject was dictated by myself; you gave it.

Caesar. Oh how beautifully is the water painted! how vividly the sun strikes against the snows on Taurus! the grey temples and pier-head of Tarsus catch it differently, and the monumental mount on the left is half in shade. In the countenance of those pirates I did not observe such diversity, nor that any boy pulled his father back: I did not indeed mark them or notice them at all.

Lucullus. The painter, in this fresco, the last work finished, had dissatisfied me in one particular. 'That beautiful young face,' said I, 'appears not to threaten death.'

'Lucius,' he replied, 'if one muscle were moved, it were not Caesar's: beside, he said it 'jokingly, though resolved.'

'I am contented with your apology, Antipho: but what are you doing now? for you never lay down or suspend your pencil, let who will talk and argue. The lines of that smaller face in the distance are the same.'

'Not the same,' replied he, 'nor very different: it smiles; as surely the goddess must have done, at the first heroic act of her descendant.'

Caesar. In her exultation and impatience to press forward, she seems to forget that she is standing at the extremity of

the shell, which rises up behind out of the water; and she takes no notice of the terror on the countenance of this Cupid who would detain her, nor of this who is flying off and looking back. The reflection of the shell has given a warmer hue below the knee: a long streak of yellow light in the horizon is on the level of her bosom; some of her hair is almost lost in it: above her head on every side is the pure azure of the heavens.

Oh! and you would not have led me up to this? You, among whose primary studies is the most perfect satisfaction of your guests!

Lucullus. In the next apartment are seven or eight other pictures from our history.

There are no more: what do you look for?

Caesar. I find not among the rest any descriptive of your own exploits. Ah Lucullus! there is no surer way of making them remembered.

This, I presume by the harps in the two corners, is the music-room.

Lucullus. No indeed; nor can I be said to have one here: for I love best the music of a single instrument, and listen to it willingly at all times, but most willingly while I am reading. At such seasons a voice or even a whisper disturbs me: but music refreshes my brain when I have read long, and strengthens it from the beginning. I find also that if I write anything in poetry (a youthful propensity still remaining) it gives rapidity and variety and brightness to my ideas. On ceasing, I command a fresh measure and instrument, or another voice; which is to the mind like a change of posture or of air to the body. My health is benefited by the gentle play thus opened to the most delicate of the fibres.

Caesar. Let me augur that a disorder so tractable may be soon removed. What is it thought to be?

Lucullus. There are they who would surmise and signify,

and my physician did not long attempt to persuade me of the contrary, that the ancient realms of Aeaetes have supplied me with some other plants than the cherry, and such as I should be sorry to see domesticated here in Italy.

Caesar. The gods forbid! Anticipate better things. The reason of Lucullus is stronger than the medicaments of Mithridates; but why not use them too? Let nothing be neglected. You may reasonably hope for many years of life: your mother still enjoys it.

Lucullus. To stand upon one's guard against Death, exasperates her malice and protracts our sufferings.

Caesar. Rightly and gravely said: but your country at this time cannot do well without you.

Lucullus. The bowl of milk which to-day is presented to me, will shortly be presented to my Manes.

Caesar. Do you suspect the hand?

Lucullus. I will not suspect a Roman: let us converse no more about it.

Caesar. It is the only subject on which I am resolved never to think as relates to myself. Life may concern us, death not; for in death we neither can act nor reason, we neither can persuade nor command; and our statues are worth more than we are, let them be but wax. Lucius, I will not divine your thoughts: I will not penetrate into your suspicions, nor suggest mine. I am lost in admiration of your magnanimity and forbearance; that your only dissimulation should be upon the guilt of your assassin; that you should leave him power, and create him virtues.

Lucullus. Caius Julius, if I can assist you in anything you meditate, needful or advantageous to our country, speak it unreservedly.

Caesar. I really am ashamed of my association with Crassus and Pompeius: I would not have anything in common with them, not even power itself. Unworthy and

ignominious must it appear to you, as it does to me, to compromise with an auctioneer and a rope-dancer; for the meanness and venality of Crassus, the levity and tergiversation of Pompeius, leave them no better names. The bestiality of the one, the infidelity of the other, urge and inflame me with an inextinguishable desire of uniting my authority to yours for the salvation of the republic.

Lucullus. I foretold to Cicero, in the words of Lucretius on the dissolution of the world,

Tria talia texta

Una dies dabit exitio.

Caesar. Assist me in accomplishing your prophecy: or rather, accept my assistance: for I would more willingly hear a proposal from you than offer one. Reflections must strike you, Lucullus, no less forcibly than me, and perhaps more justly; you are calmer. Consider all the late actions of Cneius, and tell me who has ever committed any so indecorous with so grave a face? He abstained in great measure from the follies of youth, only to reserve them accumulated for maturer age. Human life, if I may venture to speak fancifully in your presence, hath its equinoxes. In the vernal its flowers open under violent tempests: in the autumnal it is more exempt from gusts and storms, more regular, serene, and temperate, looks complacently on the fruits it has gathered, on the harvests it has reaped, and is not averse to the graces of order, to the avocations of literature, to the genial warmth of honest conviviality, and to the mild necessity of repose. Thrown out from the course of Nature, this man stood aside and solitary, and found everything around him unattractive. And now, in the decline of life, he has recourse to those associates, of whom the best that can be said is, that they would have less disgraced its outset. Repulsing you and Cicero and Cato, the leaders of his party and the propagators of his power, Pompeius the Great takes the arm

of Clodius, and walks publicly with him in the forum; who nevertheless the other day headed a chorus (I am informed) of the most profligate and opprobrious youths in Rome, and sang responsively worse than Fescennine songs to his dishonour. Where was he? Before them? in court? defending a client? He came indeed with that intention; but sat mortified, speechless, and despondent. The senate connived at the indignity. Even Gabinius, his flatterer and dependant, shuns him. The other consul is alienated from him totally, and favours me through Calpurnia, who watches over my security and interests at home. Julia, my daughter, was given in marriage to Pompeius for this purpose only: she fails to accomplish it: politically then and morally, the marriage loses its validity by losing its intent. I go into Gaul, commander for five years: Crassus is preparing for an expedition against the Parthians: the senate and people bend before Pompeius, but reluctantly and indignantly. Everything would be more tolerable to me, if I could permit him to boast that he had duped me: but my glory requires that, letting him choose his own encampment, square the declivities, clear the ground about the eminence, foss and pale it, I should storm and keep it. Whatever he may boast of his eloquence and military skill, I fear nothing from the orator who tells us what he would have spoken, nor from the general who sees what he should have done. My first proposal for accommodation and concord shall be submitted to you (if indeed you will not frame it for me), and, should you deem it unfair, shall be suppressed. No successive step shall be made by me without your concurrence: in short, I am inclined to take up any line of conduct, in conjunction with you, for the settling of the commonwealth. Does the proposal seem to you so unimportant on the one hand, or so impracticable and unreasonable on the other, that you smile and shake your head?

Lucullus. Caesar! Caesar! you write upon language and analogy; no man better. Tell me then whether mud is not said to be settled when it sinks to the bottom? and whether those who are about to sink a state, do not in like manner talk of settling it?

Caesar. I wish I had time to converse with you on language, or skill to parry your reproofs with equal wit; for serious you cannot be. At present let us remove what is bad; which must always be done before good of any kind can spring up.

The designs of Cneius are suspected by many in the senate, and his pride is obnoxious to all. Your party would prevail against him; for he has enriched fewer adherents than you have; and even his best friends are for the most part in a greater degree yours.

Lucullus. I have enriched no adherents, Caius Julius. Many of my officers, it is true, are easy in their circumstances: they however gained their wealth, not from the plunder of our confederates, not from those who should enjoy with security their municipal rights and paternal farms in Italy, but from the enemy's camps and cities.

Caesar. We two might appease the public mind, preparing the leaders of the senate for our labours, and intimidating the factious.

Lucullus. Hilarity never forsakes you, Caesar! and you are the happiest man upon earth in the facility with which you communicate it. Hear me, and believe me. I am about to mount higher than triumphal tribunal or than triumphal car. They who are under me will turn their faces from me; such are the rites: but not a voice of reproach or of petulance shall be heard, when the trumpets tell our city that the funereal flames are surmounting the mortal spoils of Lucullus.

Caesar. Mildest and most equitable of men! I have been much wronged; would you also wrong me? Lucius, you

have forced from me a tear before the time. I weep at magnanimity; which no man does who wants it.

Lucullus. Why cannot you enjoy the command of your province, and the glory of having quelled so many nations?

Caesar. I cannot bear the superiority of another.

Lucullus. The weakest of women feel so: but even the weakest of them are ashamed to acknowledge it: who hath ever heard anyone? Have *you*, who know them widely and well? Poetasters and mimes, labouring under such infirmity, put the mask on. You pursue glory: the pursuit is just and rational: but reflect that statuaries and painters have represented heroes calm and quiescent, not straining and panting like pugilists and gladiators.

From being for ever in action, for ever in contention, and from excelling in them all other mortals, what advantage derive we? I would not ask what satisfaction? what glory? The insects have more activity than ourselves, the beasts more strength, even inert matter more firmness and stability; the gods alone more goodness. To the exercise of this every country lies open; and neither I eastward nor you westward have found any exhausted by contests for it.

Must we give men blows because they will not look at us? or chain them to make them hold the balance even?

Do not expect to be acknowledged for what you are, much less for what you would be; since no one can well measure a great man but upon the bier. There was a time when the most ardent friend to Alexander of Macedon would have embraced the partisan for his enthusiasm, who should have compared him with Alexander of Phærae. It must have been at a splendid feast, and late at it, when Scipio should have been raised to an equality with Romulus, or Cato with Curius. It has been whispered in my ear, after a speech of Cicero, 'If he goes on so, he will tread down the sandal of Marcus Antonius in the long run, and perhaps leave Horten-

sius behind.' Officers of mine, speaking about you, have exclaimed with admiration, 'He fights like Cinna.' Think, Caius Julius! (for you have been instructed to think both as a poet and as a philosopher) that among the hundred hands of Ambition, to whom we may attribute them more properly than to Briareus, there is not one which holds anything firmly. In the precipitancy of her course, what appears great is small, and what appears small is great. Our estimate of men is apt to be as inaccurate and inexact as that of things, or more. Wishing to have all on our side, we often leave those we should keep by us, run after those we should avoid, and call importunately on others who sit quiet and will not come. We cannot at once catch the applauses of the vulgar and expect the approbation of the wise. What are parties? Do men really great ever enter into them? Are they not ball-courts, where ragged adventurers strip and strive, and where dissolute youths abuse one another, and challenge, and game, and wager? If you and I cannot quite divest ourselves of infirmities and passions, let us think however that there is enough in us to be divided into two portions, and let us keep the upper undisturbed and pure. A part of Olympus itself lies in dreariness and in clouds, variable and stormy; but it is not the highest: there the gods govern. Your soul is large enough to embrace your country all other affection is for less objects, and less men are capable of it. Abandon, O Caesar! such thoughts and wishes as now agitate and propel you: leave them to mere men of the marsh, to fat hearts and miry intellects. Fortunate may we call ourselves to have been born in an age so productive of eloquence, so rich in erudition. Neither of us would be excluded, or hooted at, on canvassing for these honours. He who can think dispassionately and deeply as I do, is great as I am; none other: but his opinions are at freedom to diverge from mine, as mine are from his; and indeed, on recollection, I

LUCULLUS. AND CAESAR

never loved those most who thought with me, but those rather who deemed my sentiments worth discussion, and who corrected me with frankness and affability.

Caesar. Lucullus! you perhaps have taken the wiser and better part, certainly the pleasanter. I cannot argue with you: I would gladly hear one who could, but you again more gladly. I should think unworthily of you if I thought you capable of yielding or receding. I do not even ask you to keep our conversation long a secret; so greatly does it preponderate in your favour; so much more of gentleness, of eloquence, and of argument. I came hither with one soldier, avoiding the cities, and sleeping at the villa of a confidential friend. To-night I sleep in yours, and, if your dinner does not disturb me, shall sleep soundly. You go early to rest, I know.

Lucullus. Not however by daylight. Be assured, Caius Julius, that greatly as your discourse afflicts me, no part of it shall escape my lips. If you approach the city with arms, with arms I meet you; then your denouncer and enemy, at present your host and confidant

Caesar. I shall conquer you.

Lucullus. That smile would cease upon it: you sigh already.

Caesar. Yes, Lucullus, if I am oppressed I shall overcome my oppressor: I know my army and myself. A sigh escaped me; and many more will follow: but one transport will rise amid them, when, vanquisher of my enemies and avenger of my dignity, I press again the hand of Lucullus, mindful of this day.

MARCELLUS AND HANNIBAL

Hannibal. Could a Numidian horseman ride no faster? Marcellus! ho! Marcellus! He moves not . . he is dead. Did he not stir his fingers? Stand wide, soldiers . . wide, forty paces . . give him air . . bring water . . halt! Gather those broad leaves, and all the rest, growing under the brush-wood . . unbrace his armour. Loose the helmet first . . his breast rises. I fancied his eyes were fixed on me . . they have rolled back again. Who presumed to touch my shoulder? This horse? It was surely the horse of Marcellus! Let no man mount him. Ha! ha! the Romans too sink into luxury: here is gold about the charger.

Gaulish Chieftain. Execrable thief! The golden chain of our king under a beast's grinders! The vengeance of the gods has overtaken the impure . .

Hannibal. We will talk about vengeance when we have entered Rome, and about purity among the priests, if they will hear us. Sound for the surgeon. That arrow may be extracted from the side, deep as it is . . . The conqueror of Syracuse lies before me . . . Send a vessel off to Carthage. Say Hannibal is at the gates of Rome . . . Marcellus, who stood alone between us, fallen. Brave man! I would rejoice and cannot . . . How awfully serene a countenance! Such as we hear are in the islands of the Blessed. And how glorious a form and stature! Such too was theirs! They also once lay thus upon the earth wet with their blood . . few other enter there. And what plain armour!

Gaulish Chieftain. My party slew him . . indeed I think I slew him myself. I claim the chain: it belongs to my king: the glory

of Gaul requires it. Never will she endure to see another take it: rather would she lose her last man. We swear! we swear!

Hannibal. My friend, the glory of Marcellus did not require him to wear it. When he suspended the arms of your brave king in the temple, he thought such a trinket unworthy of himself and of Jupiter. The shield he battered down, the breastplate he pierced with his sword, these he showed to the people and to the gods; hardly his wife and little children saw this, ere his horse wore it.

Gaulish Chieftain. Hear me, O Hannibal.

Hannibal. What! when Marcellus lies before me? when his life may perhaps be recalled? when I may lead him in triumph to Carthage? when Italy, Sicily, Greece, Asia, wait to obey me! Content thee! I will give thee mine own bridle, worth ten such.

Gaulish Chieftain. For myself?

Hannibal. For thyself

Gaulish Chieftain. And these rubies and emeralds and that scarlet . . .

Hannibal. Yes, yes

Gaulish Chieftain. O glorious Hannibal! unconquerable hero! O my happy country! to have such an ally and defender. I swear eternal gratitude . . . yes, gratitude, love, devotion, beyond eternity.

Hannibal. In all treaties we fix the time: I could hardly ask a longer. Go back to thy station . . . I would see what the surgeon is about, and hear what he thinks. The life of Marcellus; the triumph of Hannibal! What else has the world in it? only Rome and Carthage. These follow.

Surgeon. Hardly an hour of life is left.

Marcellus. I must die then! The gods be praised! The commander of a Roman army is no captive.

Hannibal (to the Surgeon). Could not he bear a sea-voyage? Extract the arrow.

Surgeon. He expires that moment.

Marcellus. It pains me: extract it.

Hannibal. Marcellus, I see no expression of pain on your countenance: and never will I consent to hasten the death of an enemy in my power. Since your recovery is hopeless, you say truly you are no captive.

(*To the Surgeon.*) Is there nothing, man, that can assuage the mortal pain? for, suppress the signs of it as he may, he must feel it. Is there nothing to alleviate and allay it?

Marcellus. Hannibal, give me thy hand . . thou hast found it and brought it me, compassion.

(*To the Surgeon.*) Go, friend; others want thy aid; several fell around me.

Hannibal. Recommend to your country, O Marcellus, while time permits it, reconciliation and peace with me, informing the Senate of my superiority in force, and the impossibility of resistance. The tablet is ready: let me take off this ring . . try to write, to sign it at least. Oh what satisfaction I feel at seeing you able to rest upon the elbow, and to smile!

Marcellus. Within an hour or less, with how severe a brow would Minos say to me, 'Marcellus, is this thy writing?'

Rome loses one man: she hath lost many such, and she still hath many left.

Hannibal. Afraid as you are of falsehood, say you this? I confess in shame the ferocity of my countrymen. Unfortunately too the nearer posts are occupied by Gauls, infinitely more cruel. The Numidians are so in revenge; the Gauls both in revenge and in sport. My presence is required at a distance, and I apprehend the barbarity of one or other, learning, as they must do, your refusal to execute my wishes for the common good, and feeling that by this refusal you deprive them of their country, after so long an absence.

Marcellus. Hannibal, thou art not dying.

Hannibal. What then? What mean you?

Marcellus. That thou mayest, and very justly, have many things yet to apprehend: I can have none. The barbarity of thy soldiers is nothing to me: mine would not dare be cruel. Hannibal is forced to be absent; and his authority goes away with his horse. On this turf lies defaced the semblance of a general; but Marcellus is yet the regulator of his army. Dost thou abdicate a power conferred on thee by thy nation? Or wouldst thou acknowledge it to have become, by thy own sole fault, less plenary than thy adversary's?

I have spoken too much: let me rest; this mantle oppresses me.

Hannibal. I placed my mantle on your head when the helmet was first removed, and while you were lying in the sun. Let me fold it under, and then replace the ring.

Marcellus. Take it, Hannibal. It was given me by a poor woman who flew to me at Syracuse, and who covered it with her hair, torn off in desperation that she had no other gift to offer. Little thought I that her gift and her words should be mine. How suddenly may the most powerful be in the situation of the most helpless! Let that ring and the mantle under my head be the exchange of guests at parting. The time may come, Hannibal, when thou (and the gods alone know whether as conqueror or conquered) mayest sit under the roof of my children, and in either case it shall serve thee. In thy adverse fortune, they will remember on whose pillow their father breathed his last; in thy prosperous (heaven grant it may shine upon thee in some other country) it will rejoice thee to protect them. We feel ourselves the most exempt from affliction when we relieve it, although we are then the most conscious that it may befall us.

There is one thing here which is not at the disposal of either.

Hannibal. What?

Marcellus. This body.

Hannibal. Whither would you be lifted? Men are ready.

Marcellus. I meant not so. My strength is failing. I seem to hear rather what is within than what is without. My sight and my other senses are in confusion. I would have said, This body, when a few bubbles of air shall have left it, is no more worthy of thy notice than of mine; but thy glory will not let thee refuse it to the piety of my family.

Hannibal. You would ask something else. I perceive an inquietude not visible till now.

Marcellus. Duty and Death make us think of home sometimes.

Hannibal. Thitherward the thoughts of the conqueror and of the conquered fly together.

Marcellus. Hast thou any prisoners from my escort?

Hannibal. A few dying lie about . . and let them lie . . they are Tuscans. The remainder I saw at a distance, flying, and but one brave man among them . . he appeared a Roman . . a youth who turned back, though wounded. They surrounded and dragged him away, spurring his horse with their swords. These Etrurians measure their courage carefully, and tack it well together before they put it on, but throw it off again with lordly ease.

Marcellus, why think about them? or does aught else disquiet your thoughts?

Marcellus. I have suppressed it long enough. My son . . my beloved son.

Hannibal. Where is he? Can it be? Was he with you?

Marcellus. He would have shared my fate . . and has not. Gods of my country! beneficent throughout life to me, in death surpassingly beneficent, I render you, for the last time, thanks.

METELLUS AND MARIUS

Metellus. Well met, Caius Marius! My orders are to find instantly a centurion who shall mount the walls; one capable of observation, acute in remark, prompt, calm, active, intrepid. The Numantians are sacrificing to the gods in secrecy: they have sounded the horn once only; and hoarsely, and low, and mournfully.

Marius. Was that ladder I see yonder among the caper-bushes and purple lilies, under where the fig-tree grows out of the rampart, left for me?

Metellus. Even so, wert thou willing. Wouldst thou mount it?

Marius. Rejoicingly. If none are below or near, may I explore the state of things by entering the city?

Metellus. Use thy discretion in that.

What seest thou? Wouldst thou leap down? Lift the ladder.

Marius. Are there spikes in it where it sticks in the turf? I should slip else.

Metellus. How! bravest of our centurions, art even thou afraid? Seest thou anyone by?

Marius. Ay; some hundreds close beneath me.

Metellus. Retire then. Hasten back; I will protect thy descent.

Marius. May I speak, O Metellus, without an offence to discipline?

Metellus. Say.

Marius. Listen! Dost thou not hear!

Metellus. Shame on thee! alight, alight! my shield shall cover thee.

Marius. There is a murmur like the hum of bees in the beanfield of Cereate; for the sun is hot and the ground is thirsty. When will it have drunk up for me the blood that has run, and is yet oozing on it, from those fresh bodies!

Metellus. How? We have not fought for many days; what bodies then are fresh ones?

Marius. Close beneath the wall are those of infants and of girls: in the middle of the road are youth, emaciated; some either unwounded or wounded months ago; some on their spears, others on their swords: no few have received in mutual death the last inter-change of friendship; their daggers unite them, hilt to hilt, bosom to bosom.

Metellus. Mark rather the living . . . what are they about?

Marius. About the sacrifice, which portends them, I conjecture, but little good, it burns sullenly and slowly. The victim will lie upon the pyre till morning, and still be unconsumed, unless they bring more fuel.

I will leap down and walk on cautiously, and return with tidings, if death should spare me.

Never was any race of mortals so unmilitary as these Numantians: no watch, no stations, no palisades across the streets.

Metellus. Did they want then all the wood for the altar?

Marius. It appears so . . . I will return anon.

Metellus. The gods speed thee, my brave honest Marius!

Marius (returned). The ladder should have been better spiked for that slippery ground. I am down again safe, however. Here a man may walk securely, and without picking his steps.

Metellus. Tell me, Caius, what thou sawest.

Marius. The streets of Numantia.

Metellus. Doubtless: but what else?

Marius. The temples and markets and places of exercise and fountains.

Metellus. Art thou crazed, centurion! what more? Speak plainly, at once, and briefly.

Marius. I beheld then all Numantia.

Metellus. Has terror maddened thee? hast thou descried nothing of the inhabitants but those carcasses under the ramparts?

Marius. Those, O Metellus, lie scattered, although not indeed far asunder. The greater part of the soldiers and citizens, of the fathers, husbands, widows, wives, espoused, were assembled together.

Metellus. About the altar?

Marius. Upon it.

Metellus. So busy and earnest in devotion! but how all upon it?

Marius. It blazed under them and over them and round about them.

Metellus. Immortal gods! Art thou sane, Caius Marius? Thy visage is scorched: thy speech may wander after such an enterprise: thy shield burns my hand.

Marius. I thought it had cooled again. Why, truly, it seems hot: I now feel it.

Metellus. Wipe off those embers.

Marius. 'Twere better: there will be none opposite to shake them upon, for some time.

The funereal horn, that sounded with such feebleness, sounded not so from the faint heart of him who blew it. Him I saw; him only of the living. Should I say it? there was another: there was one child whom its parent could not kill, could not part from. She had hidden it in her robe, I suspect; and, when the fire had reached it, either it shrieked or she did. For suddenly a cry pierced through the crackling pinewood, and something of round in figure fell from brand to brand, until it reached the pavement, at the feet of him who had blown the horn. I rushed toward him, for I

wanted to hear the whole story, and felt the pressure of time. Condemn not my weakness, O Caecilius! I wished an enemy to live an hour longer; for my orders were to explore and bring intelligence. When I gazed on him, in height almost gigantic, I wondered not that the blast of his trumpet was so weak: rather did I wonder that Famine, whose hand had indented every limb and feature, had left him any voice articulate. I rushed toward him, however, ere my eyes had measured either his form or strength. He held the child against me, and staggered under it.

‘Behold,’ he exclaimed, ‘the glorious ornament of a Roman triumph!’

I stood horror-stricken; when suddenly drops, as of rain, pattered down from the pyre. I looked; and many were the precious stones, many were the amulets and rings and bracelets, and other barbaric ornaments, unknown to me in form or purpose, that tinkled on the hardened and black branches, from mothers and wives and betrothed maids; and some too, I can imagine, from robuster arms, things of joyance won in battle. The crowd of incumbent bodies was so dense and heavy, that neither the fire nor the smoke could penetrate upward from among them; and they sank, whole and at once, into the smouldering cavern eaten out below. He at whose neck hung the trumpet felt this, and started.

‘There is yet room,’ he cried, ‘and there is strength enough yet, both in the element and in me.’

He extended his withered arms, he thrust forward the gaunt links of his throat, and upon gnarled knees, that smote each other audibly, tottered into the civic fire. It, like some hungry and strangest beast on the innermost wild of Africa, pierced, broken, prostrate, motionless, gazed at by its hunter in the impatience of glory, in the delight of awe, panted once more, and seized him.

I have seen within this hour, O Metellus! what Rome in

the cycle of her triumphs will never see, what the Sun in his eternal course can never show her, what the Earth has borne but now and must never rear again for her, what Victory herself has envied her—a Numantian.

Metellus. We shall feast to-morrow. Hope, Caius Marius, to become a tribune: trust in fortune.

Marius. Auguries are surer: surest of all is perseverance.

Metellus. I hope the wine has not grown vapid in my tent: I have kept it waiting, and must now report to Scipio the intelligence of our discovery. Come after me, Caius.

Marius (alone). The tribune is the discoverer! the centurion is the scout! Caius Marius must enter more Numantias. Light-hearted Caecilius, thou mayest perhaps hereafter, and not with humbled but with exulting pride, take orders from this hand. If Scipio's words are fate, and to me they sound so, the portals of the Capitol may shake before my chariot, as my horses plunge back at the applauses of the people, and Jove in his high domicile may welcome the citizen of Arpinum.

JOHN OF GAUNT AND JOANNA OF KENT

Joanna. How is this, my cousin, that you are besieged in your own house, by the citizens of London? I thought you were their idol.

Gaunt. If their idol, madam, I am one which they may tread on as they list when down; but which, by my soul and knighthood! the ten best battle-axes among them shall find it hard work to unshrine.

Pardon me . . . I have no right perhaps to take or touch this hand . . . yet, my sister, bricks and stones and arrows are not presents fit for you: let me conduct you some paces hence.

Joanna. I will speak to those below in the street; quit my hand; they shall obey me.

Gaunt. If you intend to order my death, madam, your guards who have entered my court, and whose spurs and halberts I hear upon the staircase, may overpower my domestics; and, seeing no such escape as becomes my dignity, I submit to you. Behold my sword at your feet! Some formalities, I trust, will be used in the proceedings against me. Entitle me, in my attainder, not John of Gaunt, not Duke of Lancaster, not King of Castile; nor commemorate my father, the most glorious of princes, the vanquisher and pardoner of the most powerful; nor style me, what those who loved or who flattered me did when I was happier, cousin to the Fair Maid of Kent. Joanna! those days are over! But no enemy, no law, no eternity can take away from me, or move further off, my affinity in blood to the conqueror in the field of Cressy, of Poitiers, and Najora. Edward was my brother

when he was but your cousin; and the edge of my shield has clinked on his in many a battle. Yes, we were ever near, if not in worth, in danger.

Joanna. Attainder! God avert it! Duke of Lancaster, what dark thought . . . Alas! that the Regency should have known it! I came hither, sir, for no such purpose as to ensnare or incriminate or alarm you.

These weeds might surely have protected me from the fresh tears you have drawn forth.

Gaunt. Sister, be comforted! this visor too has felt them.

Joanna. O my Edward! my own so lately! Thy memory . . . thy beloved image . . . which never hath abandoned me . . . makes me bold; I dare not say generous; for in saying it I should cease to be so . . . and who could be called generous by the side of thee! I will rescue from perdition the enemy of my son.

Cousin, you loved your brother: love then what was dearer to him than his life: protect what he, valiant as you have seen him, cannot! The father, who foiled so many, hath left no enemies: the innocent child, who can injure no one, finds them!

Why have you unlaced and laid aside your visor? Do not expose your body to those missiles. Hold your shield before yourself, and step aside. I need it not. I am resolved . . .

Gaunt. On what, my cousin? Speak, and by the Lord! it shall be done. This breast is your shield; this arm is mine.

Joanna. Heavens! who could have hurled those masses of stone from below! they stunned me. Did they descend all of them together? or did they split into fragments on hitting the pavement?

Gaunt. Truly I was not looking that way; they came, I must believe, while you were speaking.

Joanna. Aside! aside! further back! disregard *me*! Look! that last arrow sticks half its head deep in the wainscot. It shook so violently, I did not see the feather at first.

No, no, Lancaster! I will not permit it. Take your shield up again; and keep it all before you. Now step aside . . I am resolved to prove whether the people will hear me.

Gaunt. Then madam, by your leave . . .

Joanna. Hold! forbear! Come hither! hither . . not forward.

Gaunt. Villains! take back to your kitchens those spits and skewers that you forsooth would fain call swords and arrows: and keep your bricks and stones for your graves!

Joanna. Imprudent man! who can save you? I shall be frightened: I must speak at once.

O good kind people! ye who so greatly loved me, when I am sure I had done nothing to deserve it, have I (unhappy me!) no merit with you now, when I would assuage your anger, protect your fair fame, and send you home contented with yourselves and me! Who is he, worthy citizens, whom ye would drag to slaughter?

True indeed he did revile some one; neither I nor you can say whom; some feaster and rioter, it seems, who had little right (he thought) to carry sword or bow, and who, to show it, hath slunk away. And then another raised his anger; he was indignant that, under his roof, a woman should be exposed to stoning. Which of you would not be as choleric in a like affront? In the house of which among you, should I not be protected as resolutely?

No, no: I never can believe those angry cries. Let none ever tell me again he is the enemy of my son, of his king, your darling child Richard. Are your fears more lively than a poor weak female's? than a mother's? yours, whom he hath so often led to victory, and praised to his father, naming each . . He, John of Gaunt, the defender of the helpless, the

comforter of the desolate, the rallying signal of the desperately brave!

Retire, Duke of Lancaster! This is no time . .

Gaunt. Madam, I obey: but not through terror of that puddle at the house-door, which my handful of dust would dry up. Deign to command me!

Joanna. In the name of my son then, retire!

Gaunt. Angelic goodness! I must fairly win it.

Joanna. I think I know his voice that crieth out, 'Who will answer for him?' An honest and loyal man's, one who would counsel and save me in any difficulty and danger. With what pleasure and satisfaction, with what perfect joy and confidence, do I answer our right-trusty and well-judging friend!

'Let Lancaster bring his sureties,' say you, 'and we separate.' A moment yet before we separate; if I might delay you so long, to receive your sanction of those sureties; for in such grave matters it would ill become us to be overhasty. I could bring fifty, I could bring a hundred, not from among soldiers, not from among courtiers, but selected from yourselves, were it equitable and fair to show such partialities, or decorous in the parent and guardian of a king to offer any other than herself.

Raised by the hand of the Almighty from amidst you, but still one of you, if the mother of a family is a part of it, here I stand, surety for John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, for his loyalty and allegiance.

Gaunt (running toward Joanna). Are the rioters then bursting into the chamber through the windows?

Joanna. The windows and doors of this solid edifice rattled and shook at the people's acclamation. My word is given for you: this was theirs in return. Lancaster! what a voice have the people when they speak out! It shakes me with astonishment, almost with consternation, while it estab-

lishes the throne: what must it be when it is lifted up in vengeance!

Gaunt. Wind; vapour . .

Joanna. . . Which none can wield nor hold. Need I say this to my cousin of Lancaster?

Gaunt. Rather say, madam, that there is always one star above which can tranquillize and control them.

Joanna. Go, cousin! another time more sincerity!

Gaunt. You have this day saved my life from the people: for I now see my danger better, when it is no longer close before me. My Christ! if ever I forget . .

Joanna. Swear not: every man in England hath sworn what you would swear. But if you abandon my Richard, my brave and beautiful child, may . . Oh! I could never curse, nor wish an evil: but, if you desert him in the hour of need, you will think of those who have not deserted you, and your own great heart will lie heavy on you, Lancaster!

Am I graver than I ought to be, that you look dejected? Come then, gentle cousin, lead me to my horse, and accompany me home. Richard will embrace us tenderly. Every one is dear to every other upon rising out fresh from peril: affectionately then will he look, sweet boy, upon his mother and his uncle! Never mind how many questions he may ask you, nor how strange ones. His only displeasure, if he has any, will be, that he stood not against the rioters; or among them.

Gaunt. Older than he have been as fond of mischief, and as fickle in the choice of a party.

I shall tell him that, coming to blows, the assailant is often in the right; that the assailed is always.

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI AND POPE EUGENIUS THE FOURTH

Eugenius. Filippo! I am informed by my son Cosimo de' Medici of many things relating to thy life and actions, and among the rest, of thy throwing off the habit of a friar. Speak to me as to a friend. Was that well done?

Filippo. Holy Father! it was most unadvisedly.

Eugenius. Continue to treat me with the same confidence and ingenuousness; and beside the remuneration I intend to bestow on thee for the paintings wherewith thou hast adorned my palace, I will remove with my own hand the heavy accumulation of thy sins, and ward off the peril of fresh ones, placing within thy reach every worldly solace and contentment.

Filippo. Infinite thanks, Holy Father! from the innermost heart of your unworthy servant, whose duty and wishes bind him alike and equally to a strict compliance with your paternal commands.

Eugenius. Was it a love of the world and its vanities that induced thee to throw aside the frock?

Filippo. It was indeed, Holy Father! I never had the courage to mention it in confession among my manifold offences.

Eugenius. Bad! bad! Repentance is of little use to the sinner, unless he pour it from a full and overflowing heart into the capacious ear of the confessor. Ye must not go straightforward and bluntly up to your Maker, startling him with the horrors of your guilty conscience. Order, decency, time, place, opportunity, must be observed.

Filippo. I have observed the greater part of them: time, place, and opportunity.

Eugenius. That is much. In consideration of it, I hereby absolve thee.

Filippo. I feel quite easy, quite new-born.

Eugenius. I am desirous of hearing what sort of feelings thou experiencest, when thou givest loose to thy intractable and unruly wishes. Now, this love of the world, what can it mean? A love of music, of dancing, of riding? What in short is it in thee?

Filippo. Holy Father! I was ever of a hot and amorous constitution.

Eugenius. Well, well! I can guess, within a trifle, what that leads unto. I very much disapprove of it, whatever it may be. And then? and then? Prythee go on: I am inflamed with a miraculous zeal to cleanse thee.

Filippo. I have committed many follies, and some sins.

Eugenius. Let me hear the sins; I do not trouble my head about the follies; the Church has no business with them. The state is founded on follies, the Church on sins. Come then, unsack them.

Filippo. Concupiscence is both a folly and a sin. I felt more and more of it when I ceased to be a monk, not having (for a time) so ready means of allaying it.

Eugenius. No doubt. Thou shouldst have thought again and again before thou strippedst off the cowl.

Filippo. Ah! Holy Father! I am sore at heart. I thought indeed how often it had held two heads together under it, and that stripping it off was double decapitation. But compensation and contentment came, and we were warm enough without it.

Eugenius. I am minded to reprove thee gravely. No wonder it pleased the Virgin, and the saints about her, to

permit that the enemy of our faith should lead thee captive into Barbary.

Filippo. The pleasure was all on their side → *on the ?*

Eugenius. I have heard a great many stories both ^{of one} of males and females who were taken by Tunisians and Algerines: and although there is a sameness in certain parts of them, my especial benevolence toward thee, worthy Filippo, would induce me to lend a vacant ear to thy report. And now, good Filippo, I could sip a small-glass of muscatel or Orvieto, and turn over a few bleached almonds, or essay a smart dried apricot at intervals, and listen while thou relatest to me the manners and customs of that country, and particularly as touching thy own adversities. First, how wast thou taken?

Filippo. I was visiting at Pesaro my worshipful friend the canonico Andrea Paccone, who delighted in the guitar, played ^{acc} it skilfully, and was always fond of hearing it well accompanied by the voice. My own instrument I had brought with me, together with many gay Florentine songs, some of which were of such a turn and tendency, that the canonico thought they would sound better on water, and rather far from shore, than within the walls of the canonicate. He proposed then, one evening when there was little wind stirring, to exercise three young abbates¹ on their several parts, a little way out of hearing from the water's edge.

Eugenius. I disapprove of exercising young abbates in that manner.

Filippo. Inadvertently, O Holy Father! I have made the affair seem worse than it really was. In fact, there were only two genuine abbates; the third was Donna Lisetta, the good canonico's pretty niece, who looks so archly at your Holiness when you bend your knees before her at bed-time.

Eugenius. How? Where?

¹ Little boys, wearing clerical habits, are often called *abbati*.

Filippo. She is the angel on the right-hand side of the Holy Family, with a tip of amethyst-coloured wing over a basket of figs and pomegranates. I painted her from memory: she was then only fifteen, and worthy to be the niece of an archbishop. Alas! she never will be: she plays and sings among the infidels, and perhaps would eat a land-rail on a Friday as unreluctantly as she would a roach.

Eugenius. Poor soul! So this is the angel with the amethyst-coloured wing? I thought she looked wanton: we must pray for her release . . . from the bondage of sin. What followed in your excursion?

Filippo. Singing, playing, fresh air, and plashing water, stimulated our appetites. We had brought no eatable with us but fruit and thin marzopane, of which the sugar and rose-water were inadequate to ward off hunger; and the sight of a fishing-vessel between us and Ancona, raised our host's immoderately. 'Yonder smack,' said he, 'is sailing at this moment just over the very best sole-bank in the Adriatic. If she continues her course and we run toward her, we may be supplied, I trust in God, with the finest fish in Christendom. Methinks I see already the bellies of those magnificent soles bestar the deck, and emulate the glories of the orient sky.' He gave his orders with such a majestic air, that he looked rather like an admiral than a priest.

Eugenius. How now, rogue! Why should not the churchman look majestically and courageously? I myself have found occasion for it, and exerted it. (vain)

Filippo. The world knows the prowess of your Holiness. fa

Eugenius. Not mine, not mine, Filippo! but His who gave me the sword and the keys, and the will and the discretion to use them. I trust the canonico did not misapply his station and power, by taking the fish at any unreasonably low price; and that he gave his blessing to the remainder, and to the poor fishermen and to their nets.

Filippo. He was angry at observing that the vessel, while he thought it was within hail, stood out again to sea.

Eugenius. He ought to have borne more manfully so slight a vexation.

Filippo. On the contrary, he swore bitterly he would have the master's ear between his thumb and forefinger in another half-hour, and regretted that he had cut his nails in the morning lest they should grate on his guitar. 'They may fish well,' cried he, 'but they can neither sail nor row; and, when I am in the middle of that tub of theirs, I will teach them more than they look for.' Sure enough he was in the middle of it at the time he fixed; but it was by aid of a rope about his arms, and the end of another laid lustily on his back and shoulders. 'Mount, lazy long-chined turnspit, as thou valu'st thy life,' cried Abdul the corsair, 'and away for Tunis.' If silence is consent, he had it. The captain, in the Sicilian dialect, told us we might talk freely, for he had taken his siesta. 'Whose guitars are those?' said he. As the canonico raised his eyes to heaven and answered nothing, I replied, 'Sir, one is mine: the other is my worthy friend's there.' Next he asked the canonico to what market he was taking those young slaves, pointing to the abbates. The canonico sobbed and could not utter one word. I related the whole story, at which he laughed. He then took up the music, and commanded my reverend guest to sing an air peculiarly tender, invoking the compassion of a nymph, and calling her cold as ice. Never did so many or such profound sighs accompany it. When it ended, he sang one himself in his own language, on a lady whose eyes were exactly like the scimitars of Damascus, and whose eyebrows met in the middle like the cudgels of prize-fighters. On the whole she resembled both sun and moon, with the simple difference that she never allowed herself to be seen, lest all the nations of the earth should go to war for her, and not a man be left to breathe

out his soul before her. This poem had obtained the prize at the University of Fez, had been translated into the Arabic, the Persian, and the Turkish languages, and was the favourite lay of the corsair. He invited me lastly to try my talent. I played the same air on the guitar, and apologized for omitting the words, from my utter ignorance of the Moorish. Abdul was much pleased, and took the trouble to convince me that the poetry they conveyed, which he translated literally, was incomparably better than ours. 'Cold as ice!' he repeated, scoffing: 'anybody might say that who had seen Atlas: but a genuine poet would rather say, Cold as a lizard or a lobster'." There is no controverting a critic who has twenty stout rowers and twenty well-knotted rope-ends. Added to which, he seemed to know as much of the matter as the generality of those who talk about it. He was gratified by my attention and edification, and thus continued: 'I have remarked in the songs I have heard, that these wild woodland creatures of the west, these nymphs, are a strange fantastical race. But are your poets not ashamed to complain of their inconstancy? whose fault is that? If ever it should be my fortune to take one, I would try whether I could not bring her down to the level of her sex; and if her inconstancy caused any complaints, by Allah! they should be louder and shriller than ever rose from the throat of Abdul.' I still thought it better to be a disciple than a commentator.

Eugenius. If we could convert this barbarian and detain him awhile at Rome, he would learn that women and nymphs (and inconstancy also) are one and the same. These cruel men have no lenity, no suavity. They who do not as they would be done by, are done by very much as they do. Women will glide away from them like water; they can better bear two masters than half one; and a new metal must be discovered before any bars are strong enough to confine them. But proceed with your narrative.

Filippo. Night had now closed upon us. Abdul placed the younger of the company apart, and after giving them some boiled rice, sent them down into his own cabin. The sailors, observing the consideration and distinction with which their master had treated me, were civil and obliging. Permission was granted me, at my request, to sleep on deck.

Eugenius. What became of your canonico?

Filippo. The crew called him a conger, a priest, and a porpoise.

Eugenius. Foul-mouthed knaves! could not one of these terms content them? On thy leaving Barbary was he left behind?

Filippo. Your Holiness consecrated him, the other day, Bishop of Macerata.

Eugenius. True, true; I remember the name, Saccone. How did he contrive to get off?

Filippo. He was worth little at any work; and such men are the quickest both to get off and to get on. Abdul told me he had received three thousand crowns for his ransom.

Eugenius. He was worth more to him than to me. I received but two first-fruits, and such other things as of right belong to me by inheritance. The bishopric is passably rich: he may serve thee.

Filippo. While he was a canonico he was a jolly fellow; not very generous; for jolly fellows are seldom that; but he would give a friend a dinner, a flask of wine or two in preference, and a piece of advice as readily as either. I waited on Monsignor at Macerata, soon after his elevation.

Eugenius. He must have been heartily glad to embrace his companion in captivity, and the more especially as he himself was the cause of so grievous a misfortune.

Filippo. He sent me word he was so unwell he could not see me. 'What!' said I to his valet, 'is Monsignor's complaint in his eyes?' The fellow shrugged up his shoulders

and walked away. Not believing that the message was a refusal to admit me, I went straight upstairs, and finding the door of an ante-chamber half open, and a chaplain milling an egg-posset over the fire, I accosted him. The air of familiarity and satisfaction he observed in me, left no doubt in his mind that I had been invited by his patron. 'Will the man never come?' cried his lordship. 'Yes, Monsignor!' exclaimed I, running in and embracing him; 'behold him here!' He started back, and then I first discovered the wide difference between an old friend and an egg-posset.

Eugenius. Son Filippo! thou hast seen but little of the world, and art but just come from Barbary. Go on.

Filippo. 'Fra Filippo!' said he gravely, 'I am glad to see you. I did not expect you just at present: I am not very well: I had ordered a medicine and was impatient to take it. If you will favour me with the name of your inn, I will send for you when I am in a condition to receive you; perhaps within a day or two.' 'Monsignor!' said I, 'a change of residence often gives a man a cold, and oftener a change of fortune. Whether you caught yours upon deck (where we last saw each other), from being more exposed than usual, or whether the mitre holds wind, is no question for me, and no concern of mine.'

Eugenius. A just reproof, if an archbishop had made it. On uttering it, I hope thou kneeledst and kissedst his hand.

Filippo. I did not indeed.

Eugenius. O! there wert thou greatly in the wrong. Having, it is reported, a good thousand crowns yearly of patrimony, and a canonicate worth six hundred more, he might have attempted to relieve thee from slavery, by assisting thy relatives in thy redemption.

Filippo. The three thousand crowns were the uttermost he could raise, he declared to Abdul, and he asserted that a part of the money was contributed by the inhabitants of

Pesaro. 'Do they act out of pure mercy?' said he. 'Ay, they must, for what else could move them in behalf of such a lazy unserviceable street-fed cur?' In the morning, at sunrise, he was sent aboard. And now, the vessel being under weigh, 'I have a letter from my lord Abdul,' said the master, 'which, being in thy language, two fellow slaves shall read unto thee publicly.' They came forward and began the reading. 'Yesterday I purchased these two slaves from a cruel unrelenting master, under whose lash they have laboured for nearly thirty years. I hereby give orders that five ounces of my own gold be weighed out to them.' Here one of the slaves fell on his face; the other lifted up his hands, praised God, and blessed his benefactor.

Eugenius. The pirate? the unconverted pirate?

Filippo. Even so. 'Here is another slip of paper for thyself to read immediately in my presence,' said the master. The words it contained were, 'Do thou the same, or there enters thy lips neither food nor water until thou landest in Italy. I permit thee to carry away more than double the sum: I am no sutler: I do not contract for thy sustenance.' The canonico asked of the master whether he knew the contents of the letter; he replied, no. 'Tell your master, lord Abdul, that I shall take them into consideration.' 'My lord expected a much plainer answer, and commanded me, in case of any such as thou hast delivered, to break this seal.' He pressed it to his forehead and then broke it. Having perused the characters reverentially, 'Christian! dost thou consent?' The canonico fell on his knees, and overthrew the two poor wretches who, saying their prayers, had remained in the same posture before him quite unnoticed. 'Open thy trunk and take out thy money-bag, or I will make room for it in thy bladder.' The canonico was prompt in the execution of the command. The master drew out his scales, and desired the canonico to weigh with his own hand five ounces. He

groaned and trembled: the balance was unsteady. 'Throw in another piece: it will not vitiate the agreement,' cried the master. It was done. Fear and grief are among the thirsty passions, but add little to the appetite. It seemed, however, as if every sigh had left a vacancy in the stomach of the canonico. At dinner the cook brought him a salted bonito, half an ell in length; and in five minutes his Reverence was drawing his middle finger along the white backbone, out of sheer idleness, until were placed before him some as fine dried locusts as ever provisioned the tents of Africa, together with olives the size of eggs and colour of bruises, shining in oil and brine. He found them savoury and pulpy, and, as the last love supersedes the foregoing, he gave them the preference, even over the delicate locusts. When he had finished them, he modestly requested a can of water. A sailor brought a large flask, and poured forth a plentiful supply. The canonico engulfed the whole, and instantly threw himself back in convulsive agony. 'How is this?' cried the sailor. The master ran up and, smelling the water, began to buffet him, exclaiming, as he turned round to all the crew, 'How came this flask here?' All were innocent. It appeared, however, that it was a flask of mineral water, strongly sulphureous, taken out of a Neapolitan vessel, laden with a great abundance of it for some hospital in the Levant. It had taken the captor by surprise in the same manner as the canonico. He himself brought out instantly a capacious stone jar covered with dew, and invited the sufferer into the cabin. Here he drew forth two richly-cut wine-glasses, and, on filling one of them, the outside of it turned suddenly pale, with a myriad of indivisible drops, and the senses were refreshed with the most delicious fragrance. He held up the glass between himself and his guest, and looking at it attentively, said, 'Here is no appearance of wine; all I can see is water. Nothing is wickeder than too much curiosity: we must take what Allah sends us,'

and render thanks for it, although it fall far short of our expectations. Beside, our prophet would rather we should even drink wine than poison.' The canonico had not tasted wine for two months: a longer abstinence than ever canonico endured before. He drooped: but the master looked still more disconsolate. 'I would give whatever I possess on earth rather than die of thirst,' cried the canonico. 'Who would not?' rejoined the captain, sighing and clasping his fingers. 'If it were not contrary to my commands, I could touch at some cove or inlet.' 'Do, for the love of Christ!' exclaimed the canonico. 'Or even sail back,' continued the captian. 'O Santa Vergine!' cried in anguish the canonico. 'Despondency,' said the captain, with calm solemnity, 'has left many a man to be thrown overboard: it even renders the plague, and many other disorders, more fatal. Thirst too has a powerful effect in exasperating them. Overcome such weaknesses, or I must do my duty. The health of the ship's company is placed under my care; and our lord Abdul, if he suspected the pest, would throw a Jew, or a Christian, or even a bale of silk, into the sea: such is the disinterestedness and magnanimity of my lord Abdul.' 'He believes in fate; does he not?' said the canonico. 'Doubtless: but he says it is as much fated that he should throw into the sea a fellow who is infected, as that the fellow should have ever been so.' 'Save me, O save me!' cried the canonico, moist as if the spray had pelted him. 'Willingly, if possible,' answered calmly the master. 'At present I can discover no certain symptoms: for sweat, unless followed by general prostration, both of muscular strength and animal spirits, may be cured without a hook at the heel.' 'Giesu-Maria!' ejaculated the canonico.

Eugenius. And the monster could withstand that appeal?

Filippo. It seems so. The renegade who related to me, on my return, these events as they happened, was very circumstantial. He is a Corsican, and had killed many men in battle,

and more out; but is (he gave me his word for it) on the whole an honest man.

Eugenius. How so? honest? and a renegade?

Filippo. He declared to me that, although the Mahomedan is the best religion to live in, the Christian is the best to die in; and that, when he has made his fortune, he will make his confession, and lie snugly in the bosom of the Church.

Eugenius. See here the triumphs of our holy faith! The lost sheep will be found again.

Filippo. Having played the butcher first.

Eugenius. Return we to that bad man, the master or captain, who evinced no such dispositions.

Filippo. He added, 'The other captives, though older men, have stouter hearts than thine.' 'Alas! they are longer used to hardship,' answered he. 'Dost thou believe, in thy conscience,' said the captain, 'that the water we have aboard would be harmless to them? for we have no other; and wine is costly; and our quantity might be insufficient for those who can afford to pay for it.' 'I will answer for their lives,' replied the canonico. 'With thy own?' interrogated sharply the Tunisian. 'I must not tempt God,' said, in tears, the religious man. 'Let us be plain,' said the master. 'Thou knowest thy money is safe: I myself counted it before thee when I brought it from the scrivener's: thou hast sixty broad gold pieces: wilt thou be answerable, to the whole amount of them, for the lives of thy two countrymen if they drink this water?' 'O Sir!' said the canonico, 'I will give it, if, only for these few days of voyage, you vouchsafe me one bottle daily of that restorative wine of Bordeaux. The other two are less liable to the plague: they do not sorrow and sweat as I do. They are spare men. There is enough of me to infect a fleet with it; and I cannot bear to think of being anywise the cause of evil to my fellow-creatures.' 'The wine is my patron's,' cried the Tunisian;

‘he leaves everything at my discretion: should I deceive him?’ ‘If he leaves everything at your discretion,’ observed the logician of Pesaro, ‘there is no deceit in disposing of it.’ The master appeared to be satisfied with the argument. ‘Thou shalt not find me exacting,’ said he, ‘give me the sixty pieces, and the wine shall be thine.’ At a signal, when the contract was agreed to, the two slaves entered, bringing a hamper of jars. ‘Read the contract before thou signest,’ cried the master. He read. ‘Hów is this? how is this? *Sixty golden ducats to the brothers Antonio and Bernabo Panini, for wine received from them?*’ The aged men tottered under the stroke of joy; and Bernabo, who would have embraced his brother, fainted.

On the morrow there was a calm, and the weather was extremely sultry. The canonico sat in his shirt on deck, and was surprised to see, I forget which of the brothers, drink from a goblet a prodigious draught of water. ‘Hold!’ cried he angrily; ‘you may eat instead; but putrid or sulphureous water, you have heard, may produce the plague, and honest men be the sufferers by your folly and intemperance.’ They assured him the water was tasteless, and very excellent, and had been kept cool in the same kind of earthen jars as the wine. He tasted it, and lost his patience. It was better, he protested, than any wine in the world. They begged his acceptance of the jar containing it. But the master, who had witnessed at a distance the whole proceeding, now advanced, and, placing his hand against it, said sternly, ‘Let him have his own.’ Usually, when he had emptied the second bottle, a desire of converting the Mahometans came over him: and they showed themselves much less obstinate and refractory than they are generally thought. He selected those for edification who swore the oftenest and the loudest by the Prophet; and he boasted in his heart of having overcome, by precept and example, the stiffest tenet of their abominable creed.

Certainly they drank wine, and somewhat freely. The canonico clapped his hands, and declared that even some of the apostles had been more pertinacious recusants of the faith.

Eugenius. Did he so? Cappari! I would not have made him a bishop for twice the money if I had known it earlier. Could not he have left them alone? Suppose one or other of them did doubt and persecute, was he the man to blab it out among the heathen?

Filippo. A judgement, it appears, fell on him for so doing. A very quiet sailor, who had always declined his invitations, and had always heard his arguments at a distance and in silence, being pressed and urged by him, and reproved somewhat arrogantly and loudly, as less docile than his messmates, at last lifted up his leg behind him, pulled off his right slipper, and counted deliberately and distinctly thirty-nine sound strokes of the same, on the canonico's broadest tablet, which (please your Holiness) might be called, not inaptly, from that day, the tablet of memory. In vain he cried out. Some of the mariners made their moves at chess and waved their left hands as if desirous of no interruption; others went backward and forward about their business, and took no more notice than if their messmate was occupied in caulking a seam or notching a flint. The master himself, who saw the operation, heard the complaint in the evening, and lifted up his shoulders and eyebrows, as if the whole were quite unknown to him. Then, acting as judge-advocate, he called the young man before him and repeated the accusation. To this the defence was purely interrogative. 'Why would he convert me? I never converted him.' Turning to his spiritual guide, he said, 'I quite forgive thee: nay, I am ready to appear in thy favour, and to declare that, in general, thou hast been more decorous than people of thy faith and profession usually are, and hast not scattered on deck that inflammatory language which I, habited in the dress of a Greek, heard last Easter. I went into three

churches; and the preachers in all three denounced the curse of Allah on every soul that differed from them a tittle. They were children of perdition, children of darkness, children of the devil, one and all. It seemed a matter of wonder to me, that, in such numerous families and of such indifferent parentage, so many slippers were kept under the heel. Mine, in an evil hour, escaped me; but I quite forgive thee. After this free pardon I will indulge thee with a short specimen of my preaching. I will call none of you a generation of vipers, as ye call one another; for vipers neither bite nor eat during many months of the year; I will call none of you wolves in sheep's clothing; for if ye are, it must be acknowledged that the clothing is very clumsily put on. You, priests, however, take people's souls aboard whether they will or not, just as we do your bodies: and you make them pay much more for keeping these in slavery, than we make you pay for setting you free body and soul together. You declare that the precious souls, to the especial care of which Allah has called and appointed you, frequently grow corrupt, and stink in his nostrils. Now, I invoke thy own testimony to the fact: thy soul, gross as I imagine it to be from the greasy wallet that holds it, had no carnal thoughts whatsoever, and that thy carcass did not even receive a fly-blow, while it was under my custody. Thy guardian angel (I speak it in humility) could not ventilate thee better. Nevertheless, I should scorn to demand a single maravedi for my labour and skill, or for the wear and tear of my pantoufle. My reward will be in Paradise, where a Houri is standing in the shade, above a vase of gold and silver fish, with a kiss on her lip, and an unbroken pair of green slippers in her hand for me.' Saying which, he took off his foot again the one he had been using, and showed the sole of it, first to the master, then to all the crew, and declared it had become (as they might see) so smooth and oily by the application, that it was dangerous to walk on deck in it.

Eugenius. See! what notions these creatures have, both of their fool's paradise and of our holy faith! The seven sacraments, I warrant you, go for nothing! Purgatory, purgatory itself, goes for nothing!

Filippo. Holy Father! we must stop there. *That* does not go for nothing, however.

Eugenius. Filippo! God forbid I should suspect thee of any heretical taint; but this smells very like it. If thou hast it now, tell me honestly. I mean, hold thy tongue. Florentines are rather lax. Even Son Cosimo might be stricter: so they say; perhaps his enemies. The great always have them abundantly, beside those by whom they are served, and those also whom they serve. Now would I give a silver rose with my benediction on it, to know of a certainty what became of those poor creatures the abbates. The initiatory rite of Mahometanism is most diabolically malicious. According to the canons of our catholic Church, it disqualifies the neophyte for holy orders, without going so far as adapting him to the choir of the pontifical chapel. They limp; they halt.

Filippo. Beatitude! which of them?

Eugenius. The unbelievers: they surely are found wanting.

Filippo. The unbelievers too?

Eugenius. Ay, ay, thou half renegade! Couldst not thou go over with a purse of silver, and try whether the souls of these captives be recoverable? Even if they should have submitted to such unholy rites, I venture to say they have repented.

Filippo. The devil is in them if they have not.

Eugenius. They may become again as good Christians as before.

Filippo. Easily, methinks.

Eugenius. Not so easily; but by aid of Holy Church in the administration of indulgences.

Filippo. They never wanted those, whatever they want.

Eugenius. The corsair then is not one of those ferocious creatures which appear to connect our species with the lion and panther.

Filippo. By no means, Holy Father! He is an honest man; so are many of his countrymen, bating the sacrament.

Eugenius. Bating! poor beguiled Filippo! Being unbaptized, they are only as the beasts that perish: nay worse: for the soul being imperishable, it must stick to their bodies at the last day, whether they will or no, and must sink with it into the fire and brimstone.

Filippo. Unbaptized! why, they baptize every morning.

Eugenius. Worse and worse! I thought they only missed the stirrup; I find they overleap the saddle. Obstinate blind reprobates! of whom it is written . . of whom it is written . . of whom, I say, it is written . . as shall be manifest before men and angels in the day of wrath.

Filippo. More is the pity! for they are hospitable, frank, and courteous. It is delightful to see their gardens, when one has not the weeding and irrigation of them. What fruit! what foliage! what trellises! what alcoves! what a contest of rose and jessamine for supremacy in odour! of lute and nightingale for victory in song! And how the little bright ripples of the docile brooks, the fresher for their races, leap up against one another, to look on! and how they chirrup and applaud, as if they too had a voice of some importance in these parties of pleasure that are loth to separate.

Eugenius. Parties of pleasure! birds, fruits, shallow-running waters, lute-players and wantons! Parties of pleasure! and composed of these! Tell me now, Filippo, tell me truly, what complexion in general have the discreeter females of that hapless country.

Filippo. The colour of an orange-flower, on which an over-laden bee has left a slight suffusion of her purest honey.

Eugenius. We must open their eyes.

Filippo. Knowing what excellent hides the slippers of this people are made of, I never once ventured on their less perfect theology, fearing to find it written that I should be abed on my face the next fortnight.

Eugenius. How wert thou mainly occupied?

Filippo. I will give your Holiness a sample both of my employments and of his character. He was going one evening to a country house, about fifteen miles from Tunis; and he ordered me to accompany him. I found there a spacious garden, overrun with wild flowers and most luxuriant grass, in irregular tufts, according to the dryness or the humidity of the spot. The clematis overtopped the lemon- and orange-trees; and the perennial pea sent forth here a pink blossom, here a purple, here a white one, and, after holding (as it were) a short conversation with the humbler plants, sprang up about an old cypress, played among its branches, and mitigated its gloom. White pigeons, and others in colour like the dawn of day, looked down on us and ceased to coo, until some of their companions, in whom they had more confidence, encouraged them loudly from remoter boughs, or alighted on the shoulders of Abdul, at whose side I was standing. A few of them examined me in every position their inquisitive eyes could take; displaying all the advantages of their versatile necks, and pretending querulous fear in the midst of petulant approaches.

Eugenius. Is it of pigeons thou art talking, O Filippo? I hope it may be.

Filippo. Of Abdul's pigeons. He was fond of taming all creatures; men, horses, pigeons, equally: but he tamed them all by kindness. In this wilderness is an edifice not unlike our Italian chapter-houses built by the Lombards, with long narrow windows, high above the ground. The centre is now a bath, the waters of which, in another part of the enclosure, had supplied a fountain, at present in ruins, and covered by

tufted canes, and by every variety of aquatic plants. The structure has no remains of roof: and, of six windows, one alone is unconcealed by ivy. This had been walled up long ago, and the cement in the inside of it was hard and polished. 'Lippi!' said Abdul to me, after I had long admired the place in silence, 'I leave to thy superintendence this bath and garden. Be sparing of the leaves and branches: make paths only wide enough for me. Let me see no mark of hatchet or pruning-hook, and tell the labourers that whoever takes a nest or an egg shall be impaled.'

Eugenius. Monster! so then he would really have impaled a poor wretch for eating a bird's egg? How disproportionate is the punishment to the offence!

Filippo. He efficiently checked in his slaves the desire of transgressing his command. To spare them as much as possible, I ordered them merely to open a few spaces, and to remove the weaker trees from the stronger. Meanwhile I drew on the smooth blank window the figure of Abdul and of a beautiful girl.

Eugenius. Rather say handmaiden: choicer expression; more decorous.

Filippo. Holy Father! I have been lately so much out of practice, I take the first that comes in my way. Handmaiden I will use in preference for the future.

Eugenius. On then! and God speed thee!

Filippo. I drew Abdul with a blooming handmaiden. One of his feet is resting on her lap, and she is drying the ankle with a saffron robe, of which the greater part is fallen in doing it. That she is a bondmaid is discernible, not only by her occupation, but by her humility and patience, by her loose and flowing brown hair, and by her eyes expressing the timidity at once of servitude and of fondness. The countenance was taken from fancy, and was the loveliest I could imagine: of the figure I had some idea, having seen it to advantage in

Tunis. After seven days Abdul returned. He was delighted with the improvement made in the garden. I requested him to visit the bath. 'We can do nothing to that,' answered he impatiently. 'There is no sudatory, no dormitory, no dressing-room, no couch. Sometimes I sit an hour there in the summer, because I never found a fly in it; the principal curse of hot countries, and against which plague there is neither prayer nor amulet, nor indeed any human defence.' He went away into the house. At dinner he sent me from his table some quails and ortolans, and tomatoes and honey and rice, beside a basket of fruit covered with moss and bay-leaves, under which I found a verdino fig, deliciously ripe, and bearing the impression of several small teeth, but certainly no reptile's.

Eugenius. There might have been poison in them, for all that.

Filippo. About two hours had passed, when I heard a whirr and a crash in the windows of the bath (where I had dined and was about to sleep), occasioned by the settling and again the flight of some pheasants. Abdul entered. 'Beard of the Prophet! what hast thou been doing? That is myself! No, no, Lippi! thou never canst have seen her: the face proves it: but those limbs! thou hast divined them aright: thou hast had sweet dreams then! Dreams are large possessions: in them the possessor may cease to possess his own. To the slave, O Allah! to the slave is permitted what is not his! . . . I burn with anguish to think how much . . . yea, at that very hour. I would not another should, even in a dream . . . But, Lippi! thou never canst have seen above the sandal?' To which I answered, 'I never have allowed my eyes to look even on that. But if any one of my lord Abdul's fair slaves resembles, as they surely must all do, in duty and docility, the figure I have represented, let it express to him my congratulation on his happiness.' 'I believe,' said he, 'such

representations are forbidden by the Koran; but as I do not remember it, I do not sin. There it shall stay, unless the angel Gabriel comes to forbid it.' He smiled in saying so.

Eugenius. There is hope of this Abdul. His faith hangs about him more like oil than pitch.

Filippo. He inquired of me whether I often thought of those I loved in Italy, and whether I could bring them before my eyes at will. To remove all suspicion from him, I declared I always could, and that one beautiful object occupied all the cells of my brain by night and day. He paused and pondered, and then said, 'Thou dost not love deeply.' I thought I had given the true signs. 'No, Lippil we who love ardently, we, with all our wishes, all the efforts of our souls, cannot bring before us the features which, while they were present, we thought it impossible we ever could forget. Alas! when we most love the absent, when we most desire to see her, we try in vain to bring her image back to us. The troubled heart shakes and confounds it, even as ruffled waters do with shadows. Hateful things are more hateful when they haunt our sleep: the lovely flee away, or are changed into less lovely.'

Eugenius. What figures now have these unbelievers?

Filippo. Various in their combinations as the letters or the numerals; but they all, like these, signify something. Almeida (did I not inform your Holiness?) has large hazel eyes . . .

Eugenius. Has she? thou never toldest me that. Well, well! and what else has she? Mind! be cautious! use decent terms.

Filippo. Somewhat pouting lips.

Eugenius. Ha! ha! What did they pout at?

Filippo. And she is rather plump than otherwise.

Eugenius. No harm in that.

Filippo. And moreover is cool, smooth, and firm as a nectarine gathered before sunrise.

Eugenius. Ha! ha! do not remind me of nectarines. I am very fond of them; and this is not the season! Such females as thou describest, are said to be among the likeliest to give reasonable cause for suspicion. I would not judge harshly, I would not think uncharitably; but, unhappily, being at so great a distance from spiritual aid, peradventure a desire, a suggestion, an inkling . . . ay? If she, the lost Almeida, came before thee when her master was absent . . . which I trust she never did. . . But those flowers and shrubs and odours and alleys and long grass and alcoves, might strangely hold, perplex, and entangle, two incautious young persons . . . ay?

Filippo. I confessed all I had to confess in this matter, the evening I landed.

Eugenius. Ho! I am no candidate for a seat at the rehearsal of confessions: but perhaps my absolution might be somewhat more pleasing and unconditional. Well! well! since I am unworthy of such confidence, go about thy business . . . paint! paint!

Filippo. Am I so unfortunate as to have offended your Beatitude?

Eugenius. Offend *me*, man! who offends *me*? I took an interest in thy adventures, and was concerned lest thou mightest have sinned; for by my soul! Filippo! those are the women that the devil hath set his mark on.

Filippo. It would do your Holiness's heart good to rub it out again, wherever he may have had the cunning to make it.

Eugenius. Deep! deep!

Filippo. Yet it may be got at; she being a Biscayan by birth, as she told me, and not only baptized, but going by sea along the coast for confirmation, when she was captured.

Eugenius. Alas! to what an imposition of hands was this tender young thing devoted! Poor soul!

Filippo. I sigh for her myself when I think of her.

Eugenius. Beware lest the sigh be mundane, and lest the

thought recur too often. I wish it were presently in my power to examine her myself on her condition. What thinkest thou? Speak.

Filippo. Holy Father! she would laugh in your face.

Eugenius. So lost!

Filippo. She declared to me she thought she should have died, from the instant she was captured until she was comforted by Abdul: but that she was quite sure she should if she were ransomed.

Eugenius. Has the wretch then shaken her faith?

Filippo. The very last thing he would think of doing. Never did I see the virtue of resignation in higher perfection than in the laughing light-hearted Almeida.

Eugenius. Lamentable! Poor lost creature! lost in this world and in the next.

Filippo. What could she do? how could she help herself?

Eugenius. She might have torn his eyes out, and have died a martyr.

Filippo. Or have been bastinadoed, whipped, and given up to the cooks and scullions for it.

Eugenius. Martyrdom is the more glorious the greater the indignities it endures.

Filippo. Almeida seems unambitious. There are many in our Tuscany who would jump at the crown over those sloughs and briars, rather than perish without them: she never sighs after the like.

Eugenius. Nevertheless, what must she witness! what abominations! what superstitions!

Filippo. Abdul neither practises nor exacts any other superstition than ablutions.

Eugenius. Detestable rites! without our authority. I venture to affirm that, in the whole of Italy and Spain, no convent of monks or nuns contains a bath; and that the worst inmate of either would shudder at the idea of observing such

a practice in common with the unbeliever. For the washing of the feet indeed we have the authority of the earlier Christians; and it may be done; but solemnly and sparingly. Thy residence among the Mahometans, I am afraid, hath rendered thee more favourable to them than beseems a Catholic, and thy mind, I do suspect, sometimes goes back into Barbary unreluctantly.

Filippo. While I continued in that country, although I was well treated, I often wished myself away, thinking of my friends in Florence, of music, of painting, of our villegiatura at the vintage-time, whether in the green and narrow glades of Pratolino, with lofty trees above us, and little rills unseen, and little bells about the necks of sheep and goats, tinkling together ambiguously; or amid the grey quarries or under the majestic walls of ancient Fiesole; or down in the woods of the Doccia, where the cypresses are of such a girth that, when a youth stand against one of them, and a maiden stands opposite, and they clasp it, their hands at the time do little more than meet. Beautiful scenes, on which Heaven smiles eternally, how often has my heart ached for you! He who hath lived in this country, can enjoy no distant one. He breathes here another air; he lives more life; a brighter sun invigorates his studies, and serener stars influence his repose. Barbary hath also the blessing of climate, and although I do not desire to be there again, I feel sometimes a kind of regret at leaving it. A bell warbles the more mellifluously in the air when the sound of the stroke is over, and when another swims out from underneath it, and pants upon the element that gave it birth. In like manner the recollection of a thing is frequently more pleasing than the actuality; what is harsh is dropped in the space between. There is in Abdul a nobility of soul on which I often have reflected with admiration. I have seen many of the highest rank and distinction in whom I could find nothing of the

great man, excepting a fondness for low company, and an aptitude to shy and start at every spark of genius or virtue that sprang up above or before them. Abdul was solitary, but affable: he was proud, but patient and complacent. I ventured once to ask him, how the master of so rich a house in the city, of so many slaves, of so many horses and mules, of such cornfields, of such pastures, of such gardens, woods, and fountains, should experience any delight or satisfaction in infesting the open sea, the high-road of nations? Instead of answering my question, he asked me in return, whether I would not respect any relative of mine who avenged his country, enriched himself by his bravery, and endeared to him his friends and relatives by his bounty? On my reply in the affirmative, he said that his family had been deprived of possessions in Spain, much more valuable than all the ships and cargoes he could ever hope to capture, and that the remains of his nation were threatened with ruin and expulsion. 'I do not fight,' said he, 'whenever it suits the convenience, or gratifies the malignity, or the caprice, of two silly quarrelsome princes, drawing my sword in perfectly good humour, and sheathing it again at word of command, just when I begin to get into a passion. No; I fight on my own account; not as a hired assassin, or still baser journey man.'

Eugenius. It appears then really that the infidels have some semblances of magnanimity and generosity.

Filippo. I thought so when I turned over the many changes of fine linen; and I was little short of conviction when I found at the bottom of my chest two hundred Venetian zecchins.

Eugenius. Corpo di Bacco! Better things, far better things I would fain do for thee, not exactly of this description; it would excite many heart-burnings. Information has been laid before me, Filippo, that thou art attached to a certain

young person, by name Lucrezia, daughter of Francesco Buti, a citizen of Prato.

Filippo. I acknowledge my attachment: it continues.

Eugenius. Furthermore, that thou hast offspring by her.

Filippo. Alas! 'tis undeniable.

Eugenius. I will not only legitimize the said offspring by *motu proprio* and rescript to consistory and chancery . .

Filippo. Holy Father! Holy Father! For the love of the Virgin, not a word to consistory or chancery of the two hundred zecchins. As I hope for salvation, I have but forty left: and thirty-nine would not serve them.

Eugenius. Fear nothing. Not only will I perform what I have promised, not only will give the strictest order that no money be demanded by any officer of my courts, but, under the seal of Saint Peter, I will declare thee and Lucrezia Buti man and wife.

Filippo. Man and wife!

Eugenius. Moderate thy transport.

Filippo. O Holy Father! may I speak?

Eugenius. Surely she is not the wife of another?

Filippo. No indeed.

Eugenius. Nor within the degrees of consanguinity and affinity?

Filippo. No, no, no. But . . man and wife! Consistory and chancery are nothing to this fulmination.

Eugenius. How so?

Filippo. [It is man and wife the first fortnight but wife and man ever after. The two figures change places: the unit is the decimal and the decimal is the unit.]

Eugenius. What then can I do for thee?

Filippo. I love Lucrezia: let me love her: let her love me. I can make her at any time what she is not: I could never make her again what she is.

Eugenius. The only thing I can do then is to promise I

will forget that I have heard anything about the matter. But, to forget it, I must hear it first.

Filippo. In the beautiful little town of Prato, reposing in its idleness against the hill that protects it from the north, and looking over fertile meadows, southward to Poggio Cajano, westward to Pistoja, there is the convent of Santa Margarita. I was invited by the sisters to paint an altar-piece for the chapel. A novice of fifteen, my own sweet Lucrezia, came one day alone to see me work at my Madonna. Her blessed countenance had already looked down on every beholder lower by the knees. I myself who made her could almost have worshipped her.

Eugenius. Not while incomplete: no half-virgin will do.

Filippo. But there knelt Lucrezia! there she knelt! first looking with devotion at the Madonna, then with admiring wonder and grateful delight at the artist. Could so little a heart be divided? 'Twere a pity! There was enough for me: there is never enough for the Madonna. Resolving on a sudden that the object of my love should be the object of adoration to thousands, born and unborn, I swept my brush across the maternal face, and left a blank in heaven. The little girl screamed: I pressed her to my bosom.

Eugenius. In the chapel?

Filippo. I knew not where I was: I thought I was in Paradise.

Eugenius. If it was not in the chapel, the sin is venial. But a brush against a Madonna's mouth is worse than a beard against her votary's.

Filippo. I thought so too, Holy Father!

Eugenius. Thou sayest thou hast forty zecchins: I will try in due season to add forty more. The fisherman must not venture to measure forces with the pirate. Farewell! I pray God, my son Filippo, to have thee always in his holy keeping.

NOTES

Thanks are due to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, for kind permission to use certain notes from F. A. Cavenagh's Selection from the Imaginary Conversations.

XERXES AND ARTABANUS

Artabanus was the brother of Darius, king of Persia, and the trusted adviser of his nephew Xerxes. Landor's authority is Herodotus, but as usual he has preserved liberty to modify characters and circumstances. An instance of detail for which Herodotus gives no sanction is the reference to the 'silver shields' and spears 'with golden pomegranates' of the bodyguard of Xerxes: Herodotus has nothing about silver shields, and only 1,000 out of the 10,000 had golden pomegranates on their spears.

The Persian invasion of Greece, which ended so disastrously at Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea, forms the culmination of Herodotus's *History*. Darius after his defeat at Marathon in 490 B.C., began preparations for the final subjugation of Greece, and at his death (485) desired Xerxes, his son and successor, to carry on the work. Herodotus represents Xerxes as being at first disinclined for the war. He gives an imaginary account of the Persian councils, in which Artabanus, the king's uncle, dissuades him from war, while Mardonius, his cousin, urges him on. Artabanus is taken by Herodotus as the type of the wise and cautious adviser; he had in like manner advised Darius against the Scythian expedition of 503 B.C. Mardonius similarly represents the rashness of youth. Xerxes is finally persuaded by a dream to carry on the preparations. These lasted four years, so that the Army did not start from Sardis till the spring of 480. According to Herodotus it consisted of the incredible number of over 2,000,000 fighting men, which, with servants and camp-followers, would work out at more than 5,000,000. Modern authorities reject these figures and incline to the theory that the Greeks out-numbered the Persians.

This *Conversation* may be supposed to take place at Abydos (whence Artabanus was sent home to Susa), after Xerxes had reviewed his army and wept at its numbers. Landor, as usual, satirizes the arrogance and superstition of kings and the cunning of priests; at the end he introduces a plea for religious toleration.

PAGE 3 21. *the thousand beeves*: when the army on its march reached Ilion (Troy), Xerxes sacrificed 1,000 oxen to Athene

PAGE 4. 7. *every Mede*: the Medes lost their supremacy over the Persians about 560 B.C.

13, 14. *there is only one*: i.e. Ormuzd. The Persian religion, as reformed by Zoroaster, seems to have been monotheistic. Later it became dualistic. Ormuzd, the good principle, being represented as in perpetual conflict with Ahriman, the power of evil.

15, 16. *Ignorant Greeks . . . call him Zeus*. Herodotus, in describing the procession of the Persian army, speaks of the chariot of Zeus drawn by eight white horses, and followed by that of Xerxes.

17. *Mithras*, the god of light, typified by the Sun, was the invincible general of the powers of goodness. Mithraism became popular under the Roman Empire, especially among the legionaries.

27. *the meridian*: i.e. noon

PAGE 5. 5. *the Aleuadai from Larissa*: hereditary tyrants of Thessaly, who had invited Xerxes to invade Greece

5, 6. *Achilles, . . . sepulchral mound*: according to tradition he was buried near Sigeum in the Troad.

8. *descendants of Pisistratus*, tyrant of Athens (d. 527). His son, Hippias, after being expelled from Athens, went to the court of Darius, accompanied him in his invasion of Greece, and is said to have fallen at Marathon. *King of Sparta*. Demarātus; he had been deposed from kingship. Thus all these had 'been stripped of power', and were 'implacable enemies of their country'.

PAGE 6. 2, 3. *Men are always the most obedient*: it was the theory of Xerxes that bravery could be best encouraged by the lash.

8, 9. *silver shields*: the famous 10,000 Immortals. These were, however, not cavalry, as the last speech of Artabanus seems to imply.

27. *metal shields*: according to Herodotus the Persians used bucklers made of osier.

34—PAGE 7. 1. *Helmets . . . should in form be conical*: such were worn by the Sacae, a Scythian tribe in the army of Xerxes.

9. *levigated*: 'made smooth'.

PAGE 9. 21. *The holy Dream*: a stately man twice appeared to Xerxes and commanded him to carry on the war. When Artabanus

made light of the vision, Xerxes compelled him to sit on the royal throne and sleep in the royal bed. The dream appeared to him too, and the man standing over him warned him that he would be punished for dissuading Xerxes from that which was decreed by fate.

34. *Mardonius*: after the defeat of Salamis (480) he persuaded Xerxes to return home, and remained himself with 300,000 men to finish the conquest of Greece. He was, however, defeated and slain the next year at Plataea.

PAGE 10. 1. *Mages* the Magi were a priestly caste amongst the Persians, founded by Zoroaster. They interpreted dreams, and foretold the future by divination (hence the word 'magic'); they were evidently very powerful.

PAGE 11 15, 16 *many nations* there were forty-six, of whom Herodotus gives a full catalogue.

25 *The same singer* Homer, in the famous description of Olympus (*Od.* vi 40).

32 *the sons of Hipparchus* i.e. the Pisistratidae, descendants of Pisistratus.

PAGE 12 1 *parasang* a Persian measure probably about four miles.

6. *Laestrigons*. a fabulous race of cannibals, and *Cyclops*, one-eyed giants, encountered by Odysseus, both were supposed by later Greeks to have inhabited Sicily. *men turned into swine*: Circe wrought this change on the men of Odysseus. The promontory of Circeium in Latium was supposed by the Romans to be Circe's island.

7 *Gryphons* griffins, fabulous monsters who according to Herodotus dwelt in Scythia and guarded the gold of the North.

AESOP AND RHODOPE

First Conversation

Aesop, the writer of fables, is supposed to have lived about 570 B.C. Very little is known of him, though several doubtful legends are told of him in connexion with Croesus, king of Lydia. Whether he existed or not, it seems at any rate certain that no one man was the author of all the fables attributed to Aesop; indeed, they were not written down till the time of Plato. Rhodope (= 'rosy-cheeked'—her real name appears to have been Doricha) came from Thrace to Egypt, and subsequently became famous there for her beauty and wealth.

This first of the two *Conversations* between Aesop and Rhodope is

supposed to take place the day after Aesop reached Naucratis in Egypt as the slave of Xanthus.

[In a characteristic manner, Landor introduces allusions to affairs in England during his own lifetime (see notes on Alopiconos, etc.).]

PAGE 13. 8. *O good Phrygian*: Aesop's reputed birthplace was Phrygia in Asia Minor

22. *Daedalus*: an inventive Athenian who introduced various mechanical devices such as the wedge After killing his nephew, he took refuge with his son Icarus at Crete, where he built the Minoan labyrinth in which Daedalus himself was subsequently imprisoned. Afterwards, according to the myth, he made a flying apparatus which enabled him and his son to escape, but Icarus fell into the sea (the sun having melted the wax fastenings of the wings) and was drowned. Daedalus succeeded in reaching Sicily.

23, 24. *the Cretan labyrinth*: the maze (constructed by Daedalus for king Minos of Crete) in which was confined the Minotaur, a monster, born of Minos' wife, Pasiphae, and a bull of which she had become enamoured at the instigation of Neptune, to whom the king had refused to sacrifice the bull

PAGE 16. 3. *Xanthus*: according to Herodotus, Rhodope was taken to Egypt by Xanthus the Samian.

10. *Thracians*: natives of Thrace, Rhodope's home.

23. *men without heads*: (see Herodotus iv. 191)—'the dog-faced creatures and the creatures without heads, whom the Libyans declare to have eyes in their breasts.'

PAGE 18. 12. *Alopiconos*: Herodotus mentions (v. 63) Alopecae (Foxtown), on the site of which the modern village of Ambelokipo stands. It is supposed that Landor's Alopiconos (the fox-ass) is a reference to Lord Liverpool, a contemporary English statesman who was concerned in the imposition of a heavy duty on corn entering England (1815).

17. *They who raised him to power*: an allusion to the political contentions in England in Landor's time.

PAGE 19. 8. *the Trojan war*: between the Greeks and the people of Troy to recover Helen, wife of Menelaus of Sparta, who had been carried off by Paris, son of king Priam. Troy (or Ilium) was besieged for ten years before it was captured by a stratagem (Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*). The legend is now thought to have an historical foundation belonging to c. 1194-84 B.C.

13, 14. *the dethronement of Saturn*: Kronos the Titan (called Saturn in Roman nomenclature), a son of Uranus and Ge, was banished

from his throne by his son Zeus (Roman *Jupiter*) and became, in Italy, the god of agriculture.

PAGE 20. 34. *Gyas*: in Hesiod (*Theogony*) one of three monsters (the others are Cottos and Briareus) born with a hundred hands and fifty heads.

PAGE 21. 17, 18. *they will never bear the wax to be melted in the ear*: will not suffer their prejudices to be abated.

PAGE 22. 7. *Cerberus*: the dog that guarded the entrance to the infernal regions, and had to be given a cake before any might enter. Hesiod credits him with fifty heads, other classical authors with but three.

9. *Anubis*: the jackal-headed ruler of the dead in Egyptian mythology (dog-headed in Roman mythology).

16, 17. *to hold Love by both wings*: the god of love, Eros (Roman *Cupid*), is represented as a winged child armed with bow and arrow (see Rhodope's reference to his statue).

PAGE 23. 12. *mythos (myth)*: a purely-fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, and events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.

33. *Laodameia*: wife of Protesilaus, slain by Hector before Troy. The ghost of her dead husband appeared to her and led her to the underworld. See Wordsworth's poem of that name. *Helen*: see note on Trojan war above. *Leda*: daughter of Thespius and wife of Tyndarus, king of Sparta. Zeus fell in love with her while she was bathing in the Eurotas, and turned himself into a swan in order to approach her. Castor, Clytemnestra, Pollox, and Helen were their offspring.

PAGE 24. 6 *amaranth*: a mythical flower supposed never to fade.

PAGE 26. 5. *tamarisk*: an evergreen shrub with small bright green leaves and rose-pink blossom. *lentisk*: the mastic tree; grows in the East and yields a substance used as chewing gum. *acacia*: a tree or shrub of the *mimosa* family.

6. *reseda*: an herbaceous plant used as a charm.

14. *Libya*: Africa was so called in Greek terminology.

16. *Aegean*: the classical name for that part of the Mediterranean between Greece and Asia Minor.

AESOP AND RHODOPE

Second Conversation

The touching story in the second *Conversation* is wholly an invention by Landor, having no basis in the classical legend of Rhodope. That she was a slave in the household of Aesop's master is on the authority of Herodotus. In spite of his deformity, Rhodope fell in love with Aesop, because of his kindness and wisdom, but he at first refused to return her love on account of the difference in their ages—she was only fourteen.

The range of Landor's powers as a prose-writer—his command of tender, disciplined pathos, his warmth and colour, his devotion to classical form and balance—are well illustrated by this *Conversation*. Rhodope's story of her father's devotion is an excellent example of strongly emotional writing controlled by artistic decorum.

PAGE 28. 22. *empeadest* accuse, impeach (More commonly 'implead'.)

PAGE 29. 21. *Thrace*. the eastern part of modern Turkey

24. *Phrygia*: in Asia Minor.

PAGE 30. 2, 3. *any who lives on the fruits of the earth* a Homeric reminiscence (See *Iliad*, vi. 142.)

PAGE 31. 7. *Death is lurking* Landor probably has in mind the Egyptian bean (called also 'sacred' and 'Pythagorean'—*Nelumbium speciosum*) which is identified with the fruit of the lotus. Herodotus (ii. 92) speaks of it as 'like the poppy'—doubtless in its narcotic properties. Hence 'the slumberer beneath its blossoms' would suffer from the effects of opium.

PAGE 32. 14. *chlamys*. a long scarf, worn by both men and women, but rarely by children.

PAGE 33. 30. *drachma* a small silver coin, worth from 9d to 1s.

32. *Nemesis and the Eumenides*. avenging deities, who bring punishment upon those who by too great prosperity arouse the envy of the gods, and are thus led on to commit the worst crimes. '*Eumenides*' (= 'the kindly ones'), a euphemism for Erinyes or Furies.

PAGE 35. 34. *Midas*: chosen for his notorious love of gold, *Lycaon* (a king of Arcadia), for his impiety and in particular his devouring human flesh—as a punishment for which he was turned by Jupiter into a wolf.

PAGE 36. 31. *steeds of Rhaesus*: Rhaesus, king of the Thracians, fought for the Trojans at the siege of Troy. His horses were famous

for their speed and beauty, being whiter than snow (*Iliad*, x. 434.) They were carried off in the night by Odysseus and Diomedes.

34. *the tents which whitened the plain of Simöis*: i.e. those of the Greeks, encamped near the river Simois during the siege of Troy.

PAGE 37. 1. *Eurotas*: the river of Sparta.

3. *the Phrygian*: Paris of Troy, who polluted the palace by carrying off Helen, the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta.

5. *Cythera*: an island off the south of Greece, famous for its worship of Venus (who was therefore often called Cytherea).

10. *The Fates*: Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, usually depicted as old women. They regulated human destiny, or, in poetical language, spun the web of human life.

12 *Hebrus*: the chief river of Thrace (modern Maritza).

22 *Taenarus*: a cave in the south of Greece, one of the supposed entrances to the underworld

23. *Ismarus*: a mountain in Thrace. *Strymon*: a river in Thrace; known rather for cranes than swans.

24. *Eurydice*: the wife of Orpheus, a mythical bard of Thrace. By the sweetness of his music he gained permission to bring Eurydice from Hades, on the condition that he should not look back at her till they had reached the upper world. This condition, however, he failed to fulfil, so that she was snatched back again from his sight.

26. *the land of the lotos*: to which Odysseus came in his wanderings. The lotus-eaters gave his company the lotus to eat. 'Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus-eating men, ever feeding on the lotus, and forgetful of his homeward way' (*Od.* ix. 94 sqq., Butcher and Lang's trans.). This land was afterwards identified with a part of North Africa. The Homeric lotus is of course quite different from the symbolic lotus of Egyptian art.

PAGE 38. 2. *At that time there were but two*: i.e. then she loved only her parents; now there is Aesop to share her affections.

THE EMPRESS CATHARINE AND PRINCESS DASHKOF

Catharine II of Russia (Sophia of Anhalt-Zerbst, 1729-96) married in 1745 the grandson of Peter the Great, who reigned as Peter III from January to July, 1762. Peter greatly admired his cousin, Frederick the Great, and made himself very unpopular by his con-

cessions to Germany and other unpolitic acts; whilst his private life was shameful. Catharine, too, was a woman of the fiercest passions, and she was before long separated from her husband. Gradually she formed a party, and won over to her side the imperial troops. On July 8, 1762, a revolution was effected in two hours, and entirely without bloodshed; this Catharine achieved by the help of the powerful Orlof family, and of the Princess Dashkof. Peter fled from St. Petersburg, and subsequently abdicated. However, on July 19, he died at a place called Ropsha; the official account stated that he died of a colic which flew to his brain, but it is far more likely that he was strangled. Next month Catharine was crowned Empress; she reigned alone till her death in 1796, having governed well, returning to the policy of Peter the Great; though a very bad woman, she was one of the best of Russian sovereigns.

The Princess Catharine Romanowna Dashkof (1744–1810) was the favourite companion of the Empress, and a woman of great courage who played an extremely important part in the revolution of 1762. Landor's account of the murder of Peter III is an exercise of the imagination, but there is no reason to doubt its psychological truth. This composition is too violent to be typical of Landor: it is included as evidence that his general temperance was from choice and not from incapacity.

PAGE 40. 26. *epithalamia*: the writer of an epithalamium, or marriage-song. *Livonia*: a province on the Baltic.

27. *Bessarabia*: on the Black Sea.

PAGE 41. 10, 11. *Peter was always ordering new exercises and uniforms*: it is true that Peter had a mania for military matters.

24. *in pure legitimacy*: a king, being the fountain of justice, can do no wrong legally.

PAGE 42. 21. *it signifies power over oneself*: this is Landor's interpretation of the word; it never has this meaning in Greek.

PAGE 43. 18. *the Academy*: the famous Académie française, founded by Richelieu in 1634. It consists of 40 members.

19. *Semiramis*: a legendary queen of Assyria, wife of Ninus, the reputed founder of Nineveh (c. 2182 B.C.) and Babylon; famous for her beauty and her marvellous deeds. Catharine was called 'the Semiramis of the North'.

20. *Voltaire*: the great French author—poet, dramatist, historian, novelist, and philosopher (1694–1778). He was welcomed at the court of Frederick the Great—who had been the friend of Peter III.

22. *Pucelle* (= maid): Joan of Arc, *La Pucelle d'Orléans*.

23. *he has treated her scandalously*: in his work, *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, which he wrote several years before he ventured to publish it. For Landor's own opinion of her, see the beautiful *Conversation* between her and Agnes Sorel.

26. *that monster of infamy, Louis XV*: (born 1710; reigned 1715-74). Though benevolent, he was weak and self-indulgent; and he made no attempt to avert the revolution which he saw must come.

27. *that worse monster*: Louis XIV, great-grandfather of Louis XV.

PAGE 44. 1. *Charles*: Charles VII of France, for whom Joan of Arc fought; she raised the siege of Orleans, and had him crowned at Rheims (1429).

13. *deism*: belief in God, but not in revealed religion

PAGE 45. 6, 7. *a mastiff bitch in the straw*: i.e. guarding her litter.

15. *Paphos*: in Cyprus, where was the chief temple of Venus. *Tobolsk*: in Siberia. Catherine means 'love or exile'.

34. *toilet*: i.e. toilet-table; now obsolete in this sense.

PAGE 46, 15. *I have a wild . . . protégé*: Mirovich.

AESCHINES AND PHOCION

Aeschines and Phocion were both political opponents of Demosthenes, particularly of his anti-Macedonian policy. Their oppositions were however on different planes. Aeschines indeed was in the pay of Philip of Macedon, and when he was sent to negotiate with him, the resultant Peace of Philocrates was disgraceful to Athens. He finally fled from the city after losing a law-suit against Demosthenes.

Phocion was a man of great integrity and high principles, and his execution at the age of 85 for treason was unjust and immediately regretted. He was, in addition, a man of great personal bravery, and, as an orator, a worthy opponent for Demosthenes. Landor placed him with Washington and Timoleon as one of the world's three greatest men.

In the present *Conversation*, the earliest of his classical dialogues, Landor delineates excellently the magnanimity of Phocion, and his contempt for the opinion of the mob. He dramatically puts into Aeschines' mouth various criticisms of Demosthenes and his style. Altogether it is a very interesting and probable *Conversation*—though it may be doubted whether Phocion would have been on such friendly terms with Aeschines, for, though they were united by their opposition to Demosthenes, they can have had little else in common.

PAGE 47. 5. *Yesterday, when the malice of Demosthenes* the story is given by Plutarch. No mention, however, is made of Demosthenes applying the oracle to Aeschines

17. *the soldier who has fought by my side* in the battle of Tamynae (in Euboea), where Phocion commanded (349 B.C.), 'Aeschines, serving among the hoplites, was complimented for his bravery, and sent to Athens to carry the first news of the victory' (Grote, ch 88)

27. *Demādes* a clever orator, but a quite unprincipled man; he was in the pay of Philip, and so an enemy of Demosthenes. After the battle of Chaeronea he brought about a peace by which Athens acknowledged the supremacy of Philip *Polyeuctus* another orator, of the anti-Macedonian party, and so a friend of Demosthenes. He said that Demosthenes was the best orator, but Phocion the most convincing speaker, because his speeches contained the most matter in the fewest words

PAGE 48 13 *Thirty times and oftener have you been chosen* Phocion was elected Strategus (or annual general) forty-five times, and never solicited a vote. This distinction was, as Landor says, unparalleled.

16. *Aristides* named 'the Just', famous chiefly for founding the maritime supremacy of Athens (d. 462) *Epaminondas* raised Thebes to the supremacy of Greece (d. 362)

17. *Miltiades*: commanded the Greeks at Marathon (d. 489). *Cimon* the son of Miltiades, defeated the Persians in many battles (d. 449)

32, 33. *That it is neither expedient nor just to make them* Landor deduces Phocion's ideas as to wills from his general principles. His arguments on the subject are somewhat sophistical

PAGE 49. 22 . *are rewarded by friendships and services* the figure of speech called Chiasmus, from the Greek letter χ . The words are arranged so that the first corresponds with the fourth, and the second with the third. If the corresponding words are joined, the Greek letter χ is formed, thus

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \text{services} & \\ \text{friendships} & \times & \text{friendships} \\ & \text{services} & \end{array}$$

So in Latin the figure is called *decussis*, since $x = decem$

PAGE 50. 32 *Lycabettos* a mountain near Athens, 'called afterwards Ankesmos' (Landor's note)

PAGE 51. 23, 24 *As we formerly did against the Lacedaemonians*: e.g. Sphacteria and Nisaea, which the Athenians blockaded during the Peloponnesian War.

26, 27. *Sparta, who has outraged and defied him* the Spartans

throughout refused alliance with Philip, and when in 338 he subdued the rest of the Peloponnesus, they alone held out against him.

34. *release him from the prison-house*: the Pythagoreans regarded the body as a prison or tomb in which the soul was confined till its release at death.

PAGE 52. 14. *The Locrians have admitted only two new laws*: the Epizephyrian Locrians founded a colony in South Italy in 633 B.C. Their law-giver, Zaleucus, established a very severe code, including the regulation mentioned in the text as to the introduction of new laws. There was only one very slight alteration in 200 years.

PAGE 53. 14, 15. *the thirty tyrants*: established at Athens by Lysander, at the end of the Peloponnesian War (404). They were intended to reform the laws and constitution, but in reality they acted very arbitrarily, and, after causing great dissension, they were deposed in the following year. Their rule was indeed a time 'of degradation and infamy' for Athens.

24. *libation*: 'an offering of wine poured out to the gods'

31. *that he was rather old when he died*: This sentence occurs in a genuine speech of Demosthenes, that *Against Olympiodorus*

33. *action is the first*: this dictum of Demosthenes is repeated more than once by Cicero. The word *actio* means rather 'delivery'—Quintilian puts in its place *pronuntiatio*: it includes more than gestures.

PAGE 54. 2. *'begins by scratching his head'*: Landor probably had in mind a passage where Aeschines speaks of Demosthenes as 'using strange gesticulations, as he was wont, and rubbing his head.'

18. *Aristoteles*: the great philosopher (384-322). Cicero praises 'the incredible flow and sweetness of his diction', referring evidently to his Dialogues, now lost, written in imitation of Plato's. Aristotle's extant works give no indication of his literary style, for they are probably little more than lecture notes preserved by his pupils.

20. *Plato*: the greatest of all philosophers (428-347). Phocion, though not a regular member of the Academy, was his pupil, as perhaps was Demosthenes. Landor invariably underrates Plato, whom he was incapable of understanding.

28. *Euripides*: the Greek tragedian (480-406); eighteen of his plays are extant. *Pindar*: the great lyric poet (522-442); his odes celebrate victories in the Olympian and other games.

PAGE 55. 13. *Codrus*: the last king of Athens. According to legend, when the Dorians invaded Attica (about 1000 B.C.) the oracle of Delphi foretold that they would conquer if they saved the king. Codrus

hearing this disguised himself, and picking a quarrel with some of the enemy's soldiers, was killed; the enemy then returned home. As no one was found worthy to succeed him, there was never again a king of Athens.

PAGE 56. 3. *On my expedition to Byzantium*: in 340 B.C. Phocion delivered Byzantium from a siege by Philip.

16. *Heraclea*: there were many towns of this name. The best known is the Spartan colony in Sicily; but probably Landor here means Heraclea Pontica on the Black Sea.

22 *In his repartees there is no playfulness*: Plutarch, however, says they were witty and pleasant. His voice was originally weak, and his articulation indistinct; the stories are well known of his practising speaking with pebbles in his mouth.

34 *If a thing is good it may be repeated*: Landor himself frequently repeated sentiments in words 'not exactly the same'; but in his case it seems to be due to the fact that he immediately forgot anything that he had written.

PAGE 57. 6 *fifty-six commencements for his future speeches*: these *exordia* are extant.

16 *choruses of the Furies*: Phocion so calls them because of the virulence of Demosthenes' invective against Philip. For the Furies see note to p. 33. 32.

27. *When I went into the Peloponnese*: in the spring of 347 Aeschines, not yet in the pay of Philip, visited various Peloponnesian cities as an envoy from Athens, with the purpose of rousing the people against Macedon. The mission, however, was of little avail.

29. *where I beheld the youths of Olynthus*: after Philip took Olynthus he sold most of the inhabitants into slavery. It was these slaves that Aeschines met whilst returning from Arcadia: he was deeply affected by the sight.

34. *the temple of Agraulos*: on the Acropolis. Aglauros (the more correct form of the name) was a maiden who sacrificed herself for Athens in time of war. In her temple the Athenian youths (Ephebi), took a solemn oath of loyalty and courage.

PAGE 58. 10. *pioneer*: a soldier who clears the way before an army—especially sappers and miners.

11. *Thucydides*: the Athenian historian of the Peloponnesian War, one of the greatest historians of all time (471-396?).

18, 19. *the Macedonian phalanx*: the phalanx, a compact mass of infantry, was the usual formation of early Greek armies; it was, however, greatly improved as time went on, especially by Epaminondas,

and brought to perfection by Philip. *the sacred band of Thebes*: body of 300 picked troops, which till the battle of Chaeronea remained invincible; but at this battle they were killed to a man.

30. *demon*: in its Greek sense of 'divinity'—much like the Latin sense of 'genius'—such *daimones* were either 'beneficent or malignant'.

PAGE 59 11. *Munychia*: a suburb of Athens, where were a fortress and harbour. Though so near Athens it was actually outside the city.

ADMIRAL BLAKE AND HUMPHREY BLAKE

Robert Blake, the famous English admiral, was born in 1599 and died in 1657. This *Conversation* is based on a story given by some early biographers of Blake but historically false. A brother of Admiral Blake's was punished for default in duty, but that brother was not Humphrey, the occasion was not the battle of Santa Cruz, and the punishment was inflicted by another admiral.

Blake was greatly admired by Landor. He adds in a note to this *Conversation*: 'Various and arduous as were Blake's duties, such on all occasions were his circumspection and discretion, that no fault could be detected or invented in him. His victories were won against all calculation but his own. Recollecting, however late, his services; recollecting that in private life, in political, in military, his purity was ever the same—England will place Robert Blake the foremost and the highest of her defenders. He was the archetype of her Nelsons, Collingwoods, and Pellews. Of all the men that ever bore a sword, none was worthier of that awful trust'; and in his poem *The Death of Blake* Landor calls him 'the wisest of the godly-brave'.

PAGE 62. 2, 3. *I am twelve years younger than you are, brother*: This is Landor's invention—presumably to render the situation more pathetic. Dixon is quite right in stating that Humphrey was next in age to Robert—who was the eldest of twelve sons.

THE LADY LISLE AND ELIZABETH GAUNT

Landor has here taken a characteristic and magnificently justified liberty with history. As a matter of fact, Lady Lisle was tried and executed at Winchester in 1685, for sheltering Monmouth's supporters, some weeks before Elizabeth Gaunt was condemned in London for the same offence. Landor's authority for the characters of these martyred women was Burnet's *History of the Reign of James II.*

PAGE 65. 22, 23. *Yet the twelve . . . unless the judge had threatened them*: In 1689 the attainder was annulled by Act of Parliament, on the ground that the verdict was 'injuriously extorted and procured by the menaces and violence and other illegal practices of George Lord Jeffreys, baron of Wem, then Lord Chief-Justice of the King's Bench' (Stephen, loc. cit.).

26-28 *I hope at least the unfortunate man, . . . may avoid his penalty*: Hicks was afterwards tried and hanged at Glastonbury.

33, 34. *Could I find the means of conveying to him a small pittance*: She had already given him £5, a sum which was, as Macaulay says, 'for her means, very large.'

PAGE 66 23 *The person's name*: James Burton. His abominable story is given by Macaulay.

PAGE 67. 3, 4. *I am condemned to be burnt alive*: she was the last woman to suffer death for treason (Macaulay, loc. cit.).

4-7 *Can we believe, . . . that . . . he will find those only who will conceal from him the knowledge of this execution?*—No, for Burton appeared as a principal witness at the trial

GENERAL KLÉBER AND FRENCH OFFICERS

Jean Baptiste Kléber (1753-1800) was among the greatest of French generals. After successful campaigns in Europe, he went to Egypt under Bonaparte and was left in command when the latter returned to France in 1799. In 1800 he recaptured Cairo, and in the same year was assassinated by a fanatic.

The form of this *Conversation* is interesting, as Landor departs from the strict dialogue method and uses, in part, the devices of narrative. It is also striking for its irony, a quality with which much of Landor's work is infused—and here employed with a frigidly bitter touch.

PAGE 68. 2. *Great Pyramid*: built (c. 3700 B.C.) as a tomb by the Egyptian king Cheops, in the desert near Cairo. According to Herodotus it took 100,000 forced labourers twenty years to erect. It covers 12½ acres and is estimated to contain 6,000,000 tons of stone.

21. *zecchins*: gold coins at one time current in Turkey and Venice.

PAGE 70. 24. *Sir Sydney Smith*: British admiral (1764-1840). Captured by the French in 1796, escaped two years later, and defended Acre against Napoleon's fleet in 1799.

PAGE 72. 10. *Toulon*: naval and military port and fortress on the French Mediterranean coast. *Elliot*: Admiral John Elliot.

11 *Acre*: seaport in Syria, has figured in many military and naval enterprises from the time of the Crusaders to the World War of 1914-1918.

13. *Grand Signor*. the Sultan of Turkey.

29. *Menou*. General J. F. (Baron de) Menou took command of the French army in Egypt after Kléber's assassination by a fanatic in June 1800

MARY AND BOTHWELL

Two months after the murder of her husband Darnley, Mary Queen of Scots visited her child at Stirling with a small train. During the return journey she was met by Bothwell at the head of 800 spearmen and escorted to Dunbar Castle, the scene of this *Conversation*. The queen afterwards said that Bothwell had told her she was in great peril, but while we cannot be sure that she knew of the plan beforehand, it is improbable that Bothwell would have taken such an extreme step unless he had been assured of her consent. On 12 May, nine days after Bothwell's wife had obtained a separation, his marriage to Mary was solemnized.

This is among the most subtle of Lander's *Conversations*, on account of its unobtrusive contrast between the impulsive, mercurial, passionate woman's nature beneath the majesty of the queen and the fundamental cynicism of Bothwell swayed at moments by genuine emotion.

PAGE 74 7. *groat* a coin of varying value used in several European countries, in and after the thirteenth century. The word is still used colloquially to suggest something of small worth.

16 *Pandects* originally the fifty books of Roman civil law, compiled by the order of Justinian, in the sixth century A.D.; now applied to any complete system of law.

PAGE 77. 18, 19. *the religion of your ancestors* Bothwell was a Protestant, and married Mary according to the rites of that Church, though she was, of course, a Roman Catholic.

PETER THE GREAT AND ALEXIS

Peter the Great (1672-1725), although endowed with the highest qualities of government, which justly earned him the title of 'Father of his Country,' was yet at the mercy of ungovernable passions, which often led him to acts of savage brutality. On the one hand, he revolutionized every department of Russian life; on the other, he

punished with the utmost cruelty all who opposed him, including his first wife, Eudoxia, and his eldest son by her, Alexis, who was persuaded back into Russia by a treacherous offer of forgiveness, brought to trial by his father, unanimously condemned by his judges though no real evidence of treason was available, and died either as Landor supposes or under the scourge. Landor neglects the greatness of Peter, though it would appear that he does not exaggerate his fierce passions and gross appetites. He does, however, 'whitewash' the character of Alexis, who inherited his father's vices without his genius and strength of will, and certainly had treasonable intentions, though he found no opportunity of carrying them out.

PAGE 82 13. *cocker*: pamper.

23. *my brother of Austria*. the Emperor Charles VI, who was brother-in-law of Alexis. He invited Alexis to his court, and offered to allow him 300 florins a month.

PAGE 83. 23. *Kalmuc*: nomad Mongols, subject to Russia.

30, 31. *when the Polanders and Swedes fell before me*: at Poltava.

33. *Saint Nicolas*: the patron saint of Russia. He was Bishop of Myra, and persecuted by Diocletian.

PAGE 84. 10. *Muscovites*: the old name for Russians.

16. *Upsal*: the seat of the primate (metropolitan) of Sweden.

17. *between Jew and Livornese*: i.e. what with the extortion of moneylenders and merchants. *Livornese*: adj. of Leghorn (*Ital.* Livorno).

20. *Gustavus*: Gustavus Adolphus, the famous king of Sweden (1594-1632). *Sobieski*. John III of Poland (1624-96); he defeated the Turks at Vienna in 1683.

PAGE 85. 4. *Scythians*: these details of their life come from the fourth book of Herodotus

19. *mare's milk*: was drunk fermented by the Scythians (Herod. iv. 2) and by the Kalmucs under the name of *koumiss*.

PAGE 87. 4. *Petersburgh*: founded by Peter the Great, 1703; the government was transferred there from Moscow in 1712. It was renamed Petrograd at the outbreak of the World War (1914) and changed again to Leningrad after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, when Moscow once more became the capital.

17. *Livonian*: from Livonia, a province on the Baltic.

PAGE 88. 30. *krout*: probably the German *sauerkraut*, i.e. chopped and fermented cabbage.

MIDDLETON AND MAGLIABECHI

Conyers Middleton (1683-1750), the divine, was an iconoclastic controversialist who by his writing on the subjects of miracles, the efficacy of prayer, and the veracity of the Old Testament, laid himself open to charges of latitudinarianism. There was more, however, in his philosophy than mere negation, and he was highly praised by Pope as a writer of good prose.

Antonio da Marco Magliabechi, the famous Italian librarian, died in 1714 when Middleton was still a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and before he had published a single work. The scene of this *Conversation* is Italy, which Middleton did not visit until ten years after Magliabechi's death. The writing on the Roman Catholic religion, to which Landor makes Magliabechi refer, was Middleton's *Letter from Rome, showing an exact Conformity between Popery and Paganism* which was published in 1729.

The arguments put into Magliabechi's mouth by Landor may be compared as an instance of Christian apologetic (or ecclesiastical casuistry, as some might call it) with the bishop's point of view in Browning's poem *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, or with the representations of the orthodox speaker in the *Grand Inquisitor* section of Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

PAGE 90. 7, 8. *I copied them in great measure from the Latin work of a learned German*: Middleton himself in his preface to the *Letter from Rome* made no claim of originality for the matter, but only for his mode of statement.

13. *jalousies*: a kind of Venetian blind made from sloping laths; admits air but excludes sun and rain.

20. *Galileo*: Italian philosopher and astronomer (1564-1642) who made revolutionary discoveries in astronomy which led to the breakdown of prevailing beliefs as to the construction of the universe. He was compelled by the Roman Catholic Church to retract his assertion that the earth turns daily and revolves about the sun yearly, notwithstanding that his experiments proved the assertion.

32. *ibis*: a large bird similar to a stork; sacred among the ancient Egyptians.

PAGE 91. 13. *Collyridians*: a sect of women in Thrace who worshipped the virgin Mary as a goddess, the offering of cakes being part of their rites.

15. *Eucharist*: the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the

ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church and in the 'high' Anglican churches.

25. *Saint Augustine*: (354–430) after becoming converted to Christianity at the age of thirty-two, rose to be one of the foremost figures in the Church and was bishop of Hippo for many years. Wrote *De Civitate Dei*, *Confessions*, and other works. The Augustine monastic Order was founded in accordance with his writings on Christian community life.

PAGE 92. 3, 4. *a manuscript on the inefficacy of prayer*: burnt after Middleton's death. It was never published and no copy appears to have survived.

5. *Cicero*: Marcus Tullius C. (106–43 B.C.), Roman orator, philosopher and political leader; consul in 63 B.C.; led the republican party after Caesar's assassination; put to death by the triumvirate.

13. *stiletto*: an Italian dagger with a thick but narrow blade

PAGE 95. 1. *syllogism*: an argument conducted according to the principles of logic. *enthymema*: a rhetorical argument, based merely upon probabilities. *corollary*: an inference, deduction, or consequence.

23, 24. *First Cause*: a Christian title for God as Creator of the Universe.

PERICLES AND ASPASIA

Aspasia, mistress of Pericles, whom she, being a foreigner, was unable to marry because of his own law, was represented by Aristophanes and other comic poets as the statesman's political adviser. However much this may have been caricatured, her influence on Pericles and more generally on the emancipation of women was considerable.

The philosopher Anaxagoras was a close friend of Pericles, whose political enemies attacked him indirectly by arresting the philosopher for religious offences. Through the eloquence of Pericles he was acquitted, but the rest of his life was spent in exile.

Meton was a contemporary Athenian astronomer chiefly remembered by his work in chronology.

Cleone was the political opponent of Pericles.

PAGE 97. 15. *obols*: the obol was an ancient Greek coin (first of silver, later of bronze) worth about $1\frac{1}{2}d$.

16. *panegyric*: elaborate praise; originally a public laudatory discourse in speech or writing.

PAGE 98. 6. *lucubration*: literally, a work done by artificial light; in modern use, a learned written discourse, or a laborious literary composition.

12. *Hesiod*: an early Greek poet; flourished, it is thought, about 750 B.C. Born at Ascra in Boeotia. Wrote *Works and Days*, a poem dealing with contemporary agricultural life; and the *Theogony*, which gives a mythical account of the origin of the world and the genealogy of the gods, and forms, with Homer (from which it differs widely in detail) the basis of Greek mythology.

21. *heir general*: legal term used to include heirs, female as well as male; one entitled by law to succeed to the property or rank of a deceased person.

PAGE 99. 8. *ratiocination*: the process of reasoning.

PAGE 100. 7. *a half-obol tow-link*: a cheap and crude torch of uncombed flax fibre dipped in grease and giving a dim smoky light.

11, 12. *the expedition against Samos*: Samos (a large island in the Aegean) attempted to secede from its alliance with Athens in 440 B.C., but was conquered and degraded by a large Athenian fleet under Pericles after a prolonged siege.

14. *Artemon*: prominent Christian teacher in Rome who commended humanitarian ideals; flourished c. A.D. 230.

20. *Miletus*: town in Asia Minor near the mouth of the river Meander.

ESSEX AND SPENSER

The scene of this dialogue is Essex House in the Strand, and the date December 1598. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, was in 1599 to be appointed Lieutenant and Governor General of Ireland, and his execution in 1601 was partly a consequence of treason during his term of office. Edmund Spenser, the poet, had been private secretary to the Lord Deputy (Lord Grey of Wilton) in Dublin, and had afterwards settled down in Kilcolman Castle where he wrote the *Faerie Queene*. In October 1596, rebellion broke out in Munster, and the O'Neills under the Earl of Desmond, burnt the castle. It is probable that Spenser escaped with all his family and fled to London, but Ben Jonson's account, recorded by Drummond, stated that his little child was burned to death, that he refused money from Essex, saying that he was sure he had no time to spend it, and that he died from want in King Street. This account Landor has followed, and his pitiful description of the poet's agony

and distress make it one of the most pathetic and dramatic of the *Conversations*.

PAGE 103. 1, 2. *Luckily we have a bishop who is a native*: Landor rather overdoes the tendency to 'bulls' in the bishop and dean.

32. *brief-collectors*: i.e. tax-gatherers.

PAGE 104. 33, 34. *Hanse-towns*: certain towns, chiefly in Germany, which united for mutual advantages from commerce; the alliance arose from that made by Hamburg and Lubeck in 1241.

PAGE 105. 6, 7. *Brooks make even worse neighbours than oceans do*: because the laws that govern their changes are less certain. The Protestants were then but a brook in comparison with the Jews.

9. *they stank*: Sir Thomas Browne refutes at length this 'vulgar error'—'that Jews stink naturally, that is, that in their race and nation there is an evil savour' (*Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, iv 10).

11. *Burleigh*: William Cecil, Baron Burleigh (1520-98), Elizabeth's chief minister. *Raleigh*: (1552?-1618) was a great favourite of Elizabeth until about 1588, when he began to be supplanted in her favour by Essex.

12. *Titus*: Emperor A.D. 79-81; Jerusalem was captured in 70.

15. *Berenice*: sister of King Agrippa I, and great granddaughter of Herod the Great. Titus was enamoured of her, and would have married her but for his fear of offending the Romans. The elaborate compliment to Elizabeth and the snub that follows are quite in the manner of the period.

PAGE 106. 4. *thy mansion*: 'It was purchased by a victualler and banker, the father or grandfather of Lord Riversdale' (Landor's note)

8. *Mulla*: or Mole, the name which Spenser in his poetry gave to the river Awbeg, which fed the lake at Kilmolman.

19. *Penshurst*: Sir Philip Sidney's home, near Tonbridge.

19, 20. *at the birth of each child*: it is said that Spenser had three sons and one daughter.

PAGE 107. 19. *Pastoral poetry*: Spenser had written *Astrophel*, 'a pastoral elegy,' on the death of Sidney. It bears out the truth of this remark of Essex.

27. *Leicester*: another of Elizabeth's favourites; he had, however, died in 1588.

PAGE 108. 28, 29. *Perhaps the next year may blow us away*: 'It happened so' (Landor's note). Essex was executed 25 February, 1601, a little more than two years from the supposed date of this *Conversation*.

PAGE 109. 8. *my Elizabeth*: his wife.

9. *our Edmund*: this name is Landor's supposition.

PAGE 110. 2. *these arms upon my knees*: i.e. the protection of my arms, which are now upon my knees. We are to picture Spenser as sitting bowed down with grief, with his head buried in his hands, and his elbows on his knees.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS AND AGNES SOREL

Since Agnes Sorel was only nine years old when Joan of Arc died, this *Conversation* is historically impossible. It was indeed not until 1444, thirteen years after Joan's execution, that Agnes assumed her position at the court of King Charles VII of France.

The Military exploits of Joan of Arc were for many generations regarded and admired to the virtual exclusion of her qualities as a woman and a religious enthusiast. Landor did something to redress the balance by representing here, in the first place, her humility and simple womanliness, before showing her flaming into intense fervour as a renewed realization of her great mission exalts her. It was left for Bernard Shaw in his *Saint Joan* to picture her as a pioneer of that protestantism which ultimately disintegrated the medieval system, by thrusting the asserted right of private judgement into an ordered and unified scheme, based upon tradition and authority. While it is probable that posterity has read into the life of Joan more than her intentions would warrant, there can be no doubt that she was an instrument indirectly used to destroy more than the power of the English in France. But she saw herself as a restorer, or even as a re-creator of France.

PAGE 111. 18. *the proud islanders*: the English, against whose occupation of French territory Jeanne d'Arc led her successful campaign.

21. *Philistines*: originally the warlike inhabitants of the southern coastal region in Palestine who harassed the Israelites. In the present day the word is used in various colloquial senses. Employed here in reference to David's victory over Goliath, the Philistine giant (*I Samuel*, xvii).

22. *Talbot*: an English commander.

PAGE 112, 2, 3. *Creci . . . Agincourt . . . Poitiers*: French towns where the English had won victories over the French against heavy odds, in 1346, 1356 and 1415, respectively.

PAGE 114. 25. *asseveration*: emphatic or solemn declaration.

PAGE 118. 13. *wakes*: night-watches; *vigils*: local annual festivals.

PAGE 119. 33. *a conqueror at Orleans, a king at Rheims*: through Jeanne's inspired leadership, the English force invading Orleans was defeated, and credit went to the weak-willed Dauphin who was subsequently crowned at Rheims as Charles VII.

BOSSUET AND THE DUCHESS DE FONTANGES

Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), bishop of Meaux, was one of the greatest orators and controversialists of the reign of Louis XIV. As tutor to the Dauphin he wrote a trilogy on the natures of God and man, in which his counsel to his pupil on the duties of a king was indirect and discreet criticism of his pupil's father. He looked upon the ascendancy of France, during his middle-age, as the opportunity for a religious unity which would prolong the splendour for all time. Marie Angélique de Scoraille de Roussille was created Duchess de Fontanges by Louis XIV in 1681. In the same year she fell ill, and died in 1681 at the age of twenty.

This *Conversation* provides a notable example of Landor's humour, in the contrast between the grave solemnity of Bossuet and the butterfly mood of the young Duchess, whose air of bland innocence may be read either as a true childlike unawareness of evil or as the play of acute wit. But of the excellence of Landor's wit and humour here there can be no doubt.

PAGE 121. 32, 33. *Picardy . . Sologne*: districts of northern France.

PAGE 123. 18. *Montespan*: Marquise de Montespan (1641–1707), a generous patron of men of letters.

19. *imparagonable*: unsurpassable.

24. *M. de Turenne*: (1611–1675), Marshal of France and a brilliant military leader.

25. *Mademoiselle de Duras*: of the Durfort family, famous in both French and English history. Guy de Duras married the sister of Turenne.

PAGE 124. 4. *M. le Maréchal*: Turenne.

23. *quietism*: a form of Christian mysticism originated by the Spanish priest Molinos in the late seventeenth century. Its devotees practised passive devotional contemplation and withdrawal from all things of the senses. They were regarded as heretics by the Roman Catholic Church.

25. *M. de Fénelon*: (1651–1715) one of the leading ecclesiastics of his time; a pupil of Bossuet, tutor to the Dauphin's eldest son, and author of *Fables*, *Dialogues of the Dead*, and *Télémaque*.

31, 32. *a romance he has begun*: Fénelon's *Télémaque*, a Utopian political novel, which utilizes the adventures of Ulysses' son in search of his father.

PAGE 125. 7. *Saintonge . . . pays d'Aunis*: districts of south-eastern France.

25. *funeral sermon*: Bossuet's *Oraisons Funèbres* are among his greatest works.

PAGE 126. 4. *I am seventeen*: this would date the time of the dialogue as 1678, when Bossuet would have been just over fifty, thus scarcely justifying his references to himself as advanced in age and shrivelled; but Landor was usually lax in the chronology of his *Conversations*.

LUCULLUS AND CAESAR

The situation is wholly of Landor's imagining. It is difficult to think of a date at which an interview for this purpose could have taken place and it is very improbable that in any circumstances Caesar would have depended on the aid of Lucullus. The description of the Lucullan villa is based on material in Plutarch.

L. Licinius Lucullus (110-57 or 56 B.C.) was of consular rank and aristocratic sympathies, though his family had originally been plebeian. He is best known as the conqueror of Mithridates, king of Pontus, against whom he commanded the Roman armies for eight years, 74-66 B.C. He amassed enormous riches in the East—indeed in wealth he was second only to Crassus. He owned magnificent gardens near Rome, and sumptuous villas at Naples and Tusculum, and collected a fine library, which he opened to the public. The picture that Landor draws of him appears to be on the whole too flattering, and especially misleading as to the simplicity of his life. However, in everything but his love of wealth, Lucullus was a man of much higher principles than most of his contemporaries.

In spite of its inherent improbability, the *Conversation* is one of great charm and interest. The two speakers are vividly portrayed—the cultured ease of Lucullus, and the urbanity and craftiness of Caesar: they explain clearly their views on politics and life, and make many illuminating remarks on ancient literature.

PAGE 128. 10. *his wife*: Pompey married Julia, Caesar's daughter in 59 B.C.; her death in 54 removed one of the bonds between her father and her husband. She was greatly attached to her husband, though more than twenty years his junior.

27. *curule chair*: the chair of state, used only by consuls, prætors, and other high magistrates.

PAGE 129. 7-9. *I am considered in general . . . but little liable to be prepossessed by him*: their enmity was begun by the fact that Sulla appointed Lucullus, and not Pompey, the guardian of his son. Lucullus, too, was naturally annoyed at being superseded by Pompey in the command of the Mithridatic War.

11. *that worthy*: L. Vettius, who had been an informer against Catilina. In August 59 B.C. he made a plot to murder Pompey, which was discovered and stopped. In his trial Vettius accused various men, including Lucullus and Cicerò, of being implicated in the conspiracy. He died shortly afterwards in prison, probably by his own hand.

13. *Cato*: M. Porcius Cato, the younger (95-46 B.C.), a leader of the aristocratic party, and the strenuous opponent of the triumvirs, by whom he was banished to Cyprus in 56. During the Civil War he fought on the side of Pompey, and after the final defeat of that party at Thapsus, committed suicide to escape falling into Caesar's hands. As this took place at Utica (near Carthage), he was surnamed *Uticensis*.

30. *Mutina*: in Gallia Cisalpina, on the Via Aemilia; Caesar would pass through it on the way from his province

32. *Capua*: on the Via Appia. Horace praises the bread of a place not very far distant from Capua. *Formian wine*: one of the Italian wines, from Formia (near Caieta in Latium). *Chian*: a sweet wine, from the Island of Chios; usually regarded as the best wine of ancient times.

PAGE 130. 1. *displeasure*: Caesar presumably disliked the Formian wine.

22. *philosophers*: used in the early nineteenth century to include all branches of science. So Euclid would have been called a philosopher. Cf. the term 'natural philosophy.'

29. *Archimedes*: the famous mathematician and physicist of Syracuse (287-212 B.C.). *Euchd*: the great geometrician, who lived at Alexandria (c. 300 B.C.).

PAGE 131. 7, 8. *alum and water*: still used to render cotton fabrics, etc., non-inflammable.

16. *the only wheel*: i.e. he had no 'wheel' for torture.

18, 19. *I wish, in my campaigns, I could have equalled your clemency*: Caesar was merciless in his treatment of barbarians, but clement to his enemies in the Civil War.

21. *Caucasus*: between the Black and Caspian Seas. The Romans penetrated this country in pursuit of Mithridates.

PAGE 132. 1. *Nereids*: sea nymphs, daughters of Nereus and Doris. Hesiod, in his *Theogony*, names fifty, of whom Thetis and Galatea are the best known.

2. *Tritons*: a kind of mermen, sons of Poseidon, generally represented as riding on horses and blowing trumpets made out of shells.

5. *myrrhine*: or 'murrine' (Lat. *murrhina vasa*), a substance (possibly porcelain) brought from the East by Pompey; vessels made of it were extremely valuable.

24. *Marcus Varro*: 'the most learned of the Romans,' and a very copious author. He wrote, amongst his 600 works, an important treatise on agriculture (*de re rustica*), and it is to his interest in this subject that Lucullus here refers. Varro adopted Marcus, the brother of Lucullus.

25. *Cacus*: a giant son of Vulcan, who stole from Hercules some of the cattle of Geryon and dragged them backwards into his cave, so that they should not be traced. Hercules, however, discovered them by their bellowing, and slew Cacus.

29. *Clitumnus*: a river in Umbria; its pastures were famous for white cattle, used specially for sacrifice at triumphs.

PAGE 135. 6. *the Tuscan Sea*: the Mare Inferum or Tyrrhenum, on the west of Italy. Such a view would be impossible from Tusculum, so that Landor probably has in mind some situation that he knew himself.

9. *Marcus Tullius*: Cicero. He discovered the conspiracy of Catiline, and by his famous orations drove him away from Rome (63 B.C.). Caesar was suspected by some of being implicated in this conspiracy.

PAGE 138. 7. *Lum*: or Luna, at the north of Etruria; it was famous for its wine and cheese. This detail helps to suggest the locality of Lucullus's villa.

10. *Antiochia*: the capital of Syria. Like *Alexandria*, it was a very luxurious city.

15. *chalcedony*: a beautiful translucent quartz.

25. *my studies*: he wrote (but in earlier years) a Greek history of the Marsic war, and edited and revised the *Commentaries* of Sulla (who had appointed him his literary executor).

28. *Baiae*: the favourite Roman watering-place, near Naples.

29. *cherries*: introduced by Lucullus from Cerasus in Pontus—hence the name, according to the usual etymology.

32. *Lake Larius*: the modern Como, in Cisalpine Gaul.

PAGE 139. 5. *astragals*: a semi-circular moulding, found usually on columns.

15. *Your brother*: Marcus, who was younger than Lucullus. Lucullus, who was very fond of him, waited to become aedile until his brother was old enough to stand for the office. Marcus was consul in 73, and survived his brother several years.

19. *Faesulae*: the modern Fiesole, above the Val d'Arno, for many years Landor's home. Faesulae was one of Sulla's military settlements, and the headquarters of Catiline's army.

26. *lampreys*: a kind of fish, something like eels.

PAGE 140. 3. *Your amiable son*: Lucius (?), his son by Servilia, the half-sister of M. Cato; he was educated by Cato and Cicero. He was killed after the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.), where he fought on the republican side.

27. *Mars and Venus*: see the lay of Demodocus, *Od.* viii 266-369.

34. *Danaë*: daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos. She was visited by Zeus in a shower of gold, and became the mother of Perseus. *Scopas*: a famous Greek sculptor (fourth century B.C.), the contemporary and rival of Praxiteles. He worked on the Mausoleum, portions of which are now in the British Museum.

PAGE 141. 11. *what figure is that*: the reference is to the well-known story of Caesar's capture by pirates when he was a young man. He stayed with them five weeks, living on the best terms with them; but after his ransom he had them captured, and himself saw to their crucifixion.

15. *Taurus*: the mountain chain of Asia Minor.

16. *Tarsus*: the capital of Cilicia, best known as the birthplace of St. Paul. According to Plutarch, Caesar was captured near the island Pharmacusa—considerably to the west of Tarsus.

26. *Antipho*: the name of the painter is apparently Landor's invention.

31. *the goddess*: Venus. The *gens Iulia*, to which Caesar belonged, claimed descent from Iulus, the son of Aeneas, who was the son of Venus. In this picture she is represented as like Caesar in face.

PAGE 143. 2. *Aeaetes*: the legendary king of Colchis, father of Medea, from whom Jason took the golden fleece. Landor here makes Caesar insinuate that Lucullus was being poisoned by Pompey, but there is no evidence for such a view.

6, 7. *the medicaments of Mithridates*: he had taken antidotes to every poison, so that when at the end he desired to poison himself the drug had no effect.

9. *your mother still enjoys it*: 'Cicero relates that he went from his villa to attend her funeral a few years afterward' (Landor's note).

15. *Manes*: the spirits of the dead, to whom wine, milk, flowers, etc., were offered.

PAGE 144. 10, 11. *Tria talia texta Una dies dabit exitio*: 'three so woven together one day shall give to destruction' (*Lucret.* v. 94), i.e. land, sea and heaven. Lucullus applies the words to the break-up of the triumvirate.

PAGE 145. 1. *Clodius*: a most shameless profligate, leader of the popular party. With Pompey he achieved the banishment of Cicero (whose great enemy he was) and Cato, in 58 B.C. Lucullus had divorced Clodia, his sister. The incident next mentioned is apparently a reference to Clodius's behaviour during the trial of Milo (56), when his gang of ruffians shouted insults at Pompey.

4. *Fescennine songs*: a very early kind of Latin poetry, in which coarse ridicule and personalities abounded.

8. *Gabinus*: (consul, 58) supported Clodius against Cicero.

9. *The other consul*: L. Piso.

10. *Calpurnia*: daughter of L. Piso, whom Caesar married in 59. She is well known from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

14, 15. *I go into Gaul, commander for five years*: Caesar was appointed governor of Cisalpine Gaul for five years by the Lex Vatinia (59); his command was extended for another five years in 55.

15. *Crassus*: left for Syria in 54.

PAGE 146. 1, 2. *you write upon language and analogy*: while crossing the Alps after the conference at Luca (56) Caesar wrote a book *de Analogia* (or *de Ratione Latine Loquendi*), which he dedicated to Cicero. It is often quoted by Latin grammarians, but is not extant.

30. *such are the rites*: the nearest relation of the dead man set fire to the pyre, with averted face.

PAGE 147. 9. *mimes*: actors.

29. *Alexander of Pherae*: tyrant of Pherae in Thessaly; d. 367.

3. *Scipio*: probably he means the elder Scipio Africanus (234-183), the conqueror of Hannibal.

32. *Curius*: conquered Pyrrhus in 275. A type of the best Roman character.

34. *Marcus Antonius*: one of the most celebrated Roman orators

before Cicero, the grandfather of the more famous Marcus Antonius (143-87). *Hortensius*: another great orator, eclipsed only by Cicero, who was eight years younger (114-50).

PAGE 148. 2. *Cinna*: a great general; the enemy of Sulla, whose adherents he massacred in the Civil War with Marius.

6. *Briareus*: a hundred-armed giant, 'whom the gods called Briareus, but men Aegaeon' (*Iliad*, i. 403).

22. *Olympus*. a mountain in the north of Thessaly, on the summit of which the gods were supposed to dwell, in an atmosphere always calm and clear.

MARCELLUS AND HANNIBAL

Marcus Claudius Marcellus (c. 268-208 B.C.) was one of the Roman generals during the Second Punic War.

We are told by Appien that when the Roman and Carthaginian forces were camped opposite to each other, but not yet engaged in battle, Marcellus observed what he took to be a comparatively small body of Numidians carrying off plunder and impetuously charged them at the head of only three hundred men. We are also told that when Hannibal saw his body he praised him as being a gallant soldier, while condemning him as a bad general, accorded him a stately funeral, and caused his ashes to be sent to Marcellus's son in the Roman camp. Landor runs counter to the evidence of the authorities in representing Marcellus as still alive when Hannibal arrives. But he is quite right in his picture of Hannibal's chivalry. The Romans were fond of accusing Hannibal of cruelty, perfidy, and avarice; but this seems to have been merely the result of their hatred and envy. Hannibal was not only one of the first generals of the world, but a great statesman; from his earliest years he maintained an impassioned loyalty to his country, and in private life he appears to have been upright and magnanimous.

PAGE 150. 1. *Could a Numidian horseman ride no faster?* Hannibal had evidently sent on a messenger with orders that Marcellus should be taken alive.

12. *Gaulish Chieftain*: many Gauls joined Hannibal after his passage of the Alps; over 2,000 deserted from the Roman camp.

23. *the islands of the Blessed*. mythical islands in the Atlantic where heroes slain in battle rested eternally.

PAGE 152. 22. *Minos* with his brother Rhadamanthus and his half-brother Aeacus, the judges of the dead in Hades.

PAGE 153. 4. *mine would not dare be cruel*: yet after the capture of Syracuse he was not able to restrain his soldiers from plunder—a case which he considered exceptional.

23. *The time may come, Hannibal*: the downfall of Carthage began with the defeat of Hasdrubal (Hannibal's brother) at the Metaurus (207); Hannibal himself was crushingly defeated at Zama (in N. Africa) by Scipio (202). After peace was made Hannibal left Carthage, and took refuge with Prusias, king of Bithynia; but as the Romans demanded his surrender, he took poison in 183.

PAGE 154. 8, 9. *thy glory will not let thee refuse it to the piety of my family*: the Romans believed that unless the funeral rites were duly performed there could be no rest for the spirit before 100 years.

18. *they are Tuscans*: The Tuscans (or Etrurians) were a people whose origin is doubtful: they appear to have been unrelated to the Romans.

30. *He would have shared my fate . . . and has not*: Marcellus is doubly grateful, in that his son was willing to face death, and yet escaped it.

METELLUS AND MARIUS

Caius Caecilius Metellus was the fourth and youngest son of a very powerful family. He served as tribune before Numantia, where Scipio said of him 'if his mother had given birth to a fifth child, she would have brought forth an ass'. He became consul in 113 B.C., and obtained a triumph for his victories over the Thracians. But Landor, following Scipio's remark, greatly underrates him.

Gaius Marius (157–87 B.C.) was seven times consul, though at the time of the *Conversation* he was serving in his first campaign, which ended in the fall of Numantia. He entered the army with no advantage of connexion, and would have risen slowly had not Scipio noted his regularity and good morals.

Subsequently Marius became leader of the popular party, and it was from him that his nephew, Julius Caesar, derived his sympathy for the popular cause. At the end of this dialogue Landor makes Marius predict his supremacy over the aristocracy, a prophecy fulfilled by the massacres which he perpetrated in the last year of his life.

PAGE 155. 15. *What seest thou*: Marius has climbed the ladder and is looking down into the city.

PAGE 156. 2. *Cereate*: 'The farm of Marius, near Arpinum' (Landor's note).

PAGE 169. 5, 6. *Hope, Caius Marius, to become a tribune*: i.e.

military tribune; such officers were not generally 'raised from the ranks' (which would be the modern equivalent). Metellus himself was of this rank.

15. *If Scipio's words are fate*: 'Scipio when asked who, in case of accident to him, should succeed to the chief command, replied, *Perhaps this man*, touching the shoulder of Marius' (Landor's note)

JOHN OF GAUNT AND JOANNA OF KENT

The story on which this *Conversation* is based is historical.

Partly as the result of the threat of violence by John of Gaunt (1340-99) against the bishop of London, while the bishops were sitting in judgement on Wyclif, partly in consequence of the general unpopularity of John of Gaunt with the citizens of London, fierce rioting against him broke out. Joanna (1328-85) 'the Fair Maid of Kent' was the wife of Edward, the Black Prince. When she interceded it was on behalf of one whom she believed to be plotting against her son, the future king. Many of the details, however, are of Landor's invention.

An important point to be realized in the *Conversation* is that Joanna suspects Lancaster of treason against her son, yet, in spite of that, uses her influence to save him from the violence of the mob. Landor thus exemplifies the qualities of nobility and honour.

PAGE 160. 1, 2. *besieged in your own house*: as will be seen from the above account, this detail is unhistorical. Lancaster's own house was the Savoy Palace.

20. *in my attainder*: John of Gaunt imagines that Joanna has come to charge him with treason against Richard, and she, according to Landor, is suspicious of him. (cf. *infra*, 'I will rescue from perdition the enemy of my son.')

28. *Cressy*: the first victory of the Black Prince (1346) over the French, followed in 1356 by that of Poitiers. At *Najora* in Castile he defeated Henry of Trastamare, the half-brother and rival of Don Pedro (1367). Lancaster distinguished himself at this battle.

PAGE 161. 5. *the Regency*: inaccurate. Edward III did not die till June of this year, and even then no actual regent was appointed. Lancaster had held the chief power in the land during his father's dotage.

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI AND POPE EUGENIUS THE FOURTH

- Fra Filippo Lippi (1406-69) was one of the most renowned of Italian decorative painters. Eugenius IV (1431-47) was Pope.

Landor derived this story from Bessari's biographical sketch of the painter, but committed one of his anachronisms when, thinking of a later interview which Fra Filippo Lippi had with the Pope, he put forward the date of Eugenius to the time of this interview (c. 1460). In Filippo's speech on page 169 the word 'abbates' is a term for boys connected with the services of the church and wearing clerical costume.

For light upon Fra Filippo from another angle, Robert Browning's poem, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, might be consulted.

PAGE 161. 1. *my son Cosimo*: Cosimo dei Medici (1389-1464), ruler of Florence from 1429 and a great patron of literature and art.

PAGE 167. 1, 2. *captive into Barbary*: according to the unsupported evidence of Vasari, who wrote *The Lives of the Painters*, Fra Filippo was captured and enslaved by Barbary pirates, 1431-1437.

9. *muscatel*: wine made from the muscat grape. *Orvieto*: a white wine made near Orvieto in central Italy.

PAGE 168. 3, 4. *I painted her from memory*: Fra Filippo is reputed to have painted secular portraits frequently into his sacred pictures.

6, 7. *landrail*: the corncrake, migratory bird.

7. *roach*: a small European fresh-water fish.

14. *marzopane*: marzipan or marchpone, a confection made from ground almonds, sugar, etc.

16. *Ancona*: also according to Vasari, Fra Filippo visited Ancona and Naples.

PAGE 169. 15. *Abdul the corsair*: the pirate leader.

PAGE 170. 2. *Fez*: capital of Morocco.

PAGE 171. 14. *Macerata*: town in east central Italy.

PAGE 172. 29. *patrimony*: property inherited from, or through, one's father.

PAGE 173. 20. *sutler*: one who follows troops and sells provisions, etc. to them.

PAGE 174. 6. *bonito*: a fish common in tropical seas. *half an ell*: the ell, a unit of measure in medieval times, from 27 inches in Flanders to 45 inches in England.

24. *Levant*: the Mediterranean coast lands of Asia Minor and Syria.

NOTES

PAGE 179. 26. *maravedi*: a spanish coin (a) in copper, worth one-sixth of a penny; (b) in gold, worth 14 shillings.

27. *pantoufle*: slipper.

PAGE 183. 10. *shall be impaled*: tortured or killed by having a pointed stake thrust through the body.

PAGE 184. 10. *quails and ortolans*: small birds esteemed as food.

12. *verdino*: light green.

PAGE 185. 34. *nectarine*: a small smooth-skinned peach

PAGE 187. 19. *bastinadoed*: beaten with a stick, or similar instrument, usually on the soles of the feet, as a form of punishment or torture.

PAGE 188. 15. *Fiesole*: town in Tuscany, Italy.

PAGE 189. 31. *Corpo di Bacco*': literally, 'by the body of Bacchus' — used as an expletive.

PAGE 190. 2. *Prato*: town not far from Florence.

7. *motu proprio*: A papal decree the provisions of which are decided by the Pope personally.

10. *zecchins*: see note to page 68, line 21

